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THE

WORKS

OF

WILLIAM COWPER.

COMPRISING

HIS POEMS,

CORRESPONDENCE, AND TRANSLATIONS.

WITH

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR

BY THE EDITOR,

ROBERT SOUTHEY, LL.D.

POET LAUREATE, ETC.

ILLUSTRATED WITH FIFTY FINE ENGRAVINGS.

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
H. G. BOHN, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.
MDCCCLIV.

PLATES IN THIS VOLUME

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LIFE OF COWPER.

CHAPTER XV.

MR. NEWTON'S PREFACE AFFIXED TO THE POEMS. PUBLICATION OF COWPER'S HOMER. EDITION OF MILTON PROJECTED. COMMENCEMENT OF HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH HAYLEY. MRS. UNWIN'S PARALYTIC ATTACK.

THE Task had now carried with it through several editions its elder volume, which otherwise would have made a dead stand in the first; and now, as there could be no danger of impeding its success, Mr. Newton requested that he might have the honour of seeing his name connected with the author's, by the insertion of the preface which had been suppressed[1]. Cowper replied,

[1] Yet it has been said, in a recent life of Cowper, that "Newton's selfishness, or jealousy, involved his friend in the only serious disappointment or uneasiness which, as an author, he experienced. His egotism in prefixing a preface of his own, ill written and injudicious, was one of the material causes of the bad success which attended Cowper's first publication."—With so little care is biography sometimes written! for the circumstances relating to this preface are stated in Cowper's printed correspondence. Ill-written the preface is not, for Mr. Newton never attempted to write a style, and therefore, being a man of strong natural abilities, he wrote with characteristic vigour. Neither was it injudicious, upon his own views. But it was worse; for while it spoke of Cowper's "long indisposition," and hinted at the character of that indisposition, it represented it as having occurred "some time after inclination had removed him from the hurry and bustle of life,"—thus keeping the previous attack out of sight, and leading the reader to suppose that his retirement from society had in the first instance been altogether voluntary.

In a letter to Hannah More (1787) Mr. Newton says, "I wrote a preface to the first volume of Cowper's poems. His name was not then known among the booksellers, and they were afraid to bind up my preface with the book, lest it should operate like a death's head at a feast, and by its gravity hinder the sale it was designed to recommend. But I am not afraid to send you a copy."—*Mem. of Hannah More.*

The preface, though suppressed, had been bound up with certain copies. It is in the author's presentation copy to Mr. Bull, with the use of which I have been favoured for the purpose of revising the text by that of the first edition.

"the honour of your preface prefixed to my poems will be on my side; for surely to be known as the friend of a much-favoured minister of God's word, is a more illustrious distinction in reality than to have the friendship of any poet in the world to boast of[2]." It has accordingly been inserted in all subsequent editions.

After the King's recovery, in 1789, Lady Hesketh had urged her cousin to write some verses on an event which had filled the nation with joy. Accordingly he "violated for once his engagements to Homer, and gave the morning to the King, the Queen, and her. On the word of a poet," said he, "I can assure you that I have done my best, sensible that when verses are presented to a royal personage, they ought not to be slovenly put together, nor such as one might produce between sleeping and waking. I have bestowed praise, which on these occasions is a thing of course, but have endeavoured to dress it so as to give it some air of novelty; and the best of the matter is, that though it be praise it is truth, and I could swear to it. Had the King and Queen been such as the world has been pestered with ever since such folks were heard of, they should have had no verse from me, unless you had insisted: but being such as they are, it seemed necessary that I, who am now poet by profession, should not leave an event in which their happiness and that of the nation are so much concerned, uncelebrated[3]."

The subject which he had chosen was the Queen's visit to London on the night of the illumination; and the verses were presented to the Princess Augusta, in expectation that they would be shown to her Majesty; but Cowper heard nothing of their reception. "I gratified myself," said he, "by complimenting the sovereign whom I love and honour, and that gratification will be my reward. It would, indeed, be unreasonable to expect that persons who keep a laureate in constant pay, should have either praise or emolument to spare for every volunteer who may choose to make them his subject[4]."

The laureateship became vacant by Warton's death in the year following. This office, which had never been worthily bestowed since it was taken from Dryden till Whitehead succeeded Cibber[5] in it, had been rendered respectable by its two

[2] Oct. 15, 1790. [3] March 5, 1789. [4] To Mrs. King, May 30.

[5] One of Shenstone's correspondents says to him, "I am sincerely sorry my congratulations on your having a place under government were

last possessors; and Lady Hesketh wished to procure it for Cowper, who was always ready at occasional verses, and had written so willingly at her suggestion upon the King's restoration to health. But this was an affair in which she knew it would be hazardous for her to move without his knowledge and consent. He replied to her,

MY DEAREST COZ. The Lodge, May 28, 1790.

I thank thee for the offer of thy best services on this occasion. But Heaven guard my brows from the wreath you mention, whatever wreath beside may hereafter adorn them! It would be a leaden extinguisher, clapped on all the fire of my genius, and I should never more produce a line worth reading. To speak seriously, it would make me miserable, and therefore I am sure that thou, of all my friends, would least wish me to wear it.

Adieu, ever thine—in Homer-hurry, W. C.

Other of his friends entertained the same wish for him; and upon a groundless report that odes were no longer required, and that the salary was increased, he confessed to Mr. Bagot that he felt not the same dislike to the office: "but," said he, "I could neither go to court, nor could I kiss hands, were it for a much more valuable consideration." On this point, no doubt, Lady Hesketh had apprehended that his objection would rest; but if any solicitation had been used in his behalf, it is not likely that Warton would have been succeeded by Mr. Pye.

An amusing incident occurred to Cowper on this occasion. "You will wonder," said he to Lady Hesketh[6], "when I tell you, that I, even I, am considered by people who live at a great distance, as having interest and influence sufficient to procure a place at court for those who may happen to want one. I have, accordingly, been applied to within these few

premature; but I cannot say I wish you, as your friend Griffith terms it. *Po-laury*, though I know it could not have the effect on you it so evidently has had on Whitehead. But what any one could think due to Cibber's merit, Mr. Shenstone ought to think beneath him."—*Hull's Select Letters*, vol. ii. p. 85.

Cibber might, indeed, properly have been called a *Po-laury*: but though he disgraced the office,

αμουσοτάταισι συν ᾠδαῖς,—Euripides.

he was very superior to Shadwell.

[6] June 3, 1790.

days by a Welshman, with a wife and many children, to get him made Poet-laureate as fast as possible. If thou wouldst wish to make the world merry twice a year, thou canst not do better than procure the office for him. I will promise thee, that he shall afford thee a hearty laugh in return every birthday and every new year. He is an honest man."

This honest man was probably the Welsh attorney who had before asked him to take his poetical bark[7] in tow. But if some whimsical applications were made to Cowper for his interest with gods, men, and booksellers; and if he was sometimes solicited to perform the hopeless part of chamber-counsel to suitors in the court of Parnassus, he was not without gratifying testimonies of his well deserved celebrity. Men solicited his acquaintance who proved worthy of his friendship;.. Hurdis[8], at this time, who more than any other poet might have called Cowper his master; and Park[8], whose services to English literature, gratefully as they must ever be acknowledged by all who follow him in those pleasant fields, will be considered by those who knew him as the least part of his praise. Abroad and at home the Task was read and admired: "Rose," said he[9], "learns from Dr. Maclaine, whom he saw lately, that my book is in the hands of sixty different persons at the Hague, who are all enchanted with it; not forgetting the said Dr. Maclaine himself, who tells him that he reads it every day, and is always the better for it! O rare we!"—"Have you seen," he asks Lady Hesketh[10], "the account of Five Hundred celebrated Authors now living? I am one of them.—To my honour be it spoken, the chronicler of us five hundred prodigies bestows on me, for aught I know, more commendations than on any other of my confraternity. May he live to write the histories of as many thousand poets, and find me the very best among them! Amen!" The most singular instance occurred in his own neighbourhood. He had occasion to send a man to the George at Woburn; Mr. Martin, the master of the inn, "having learnt whose servant he was, told him that he had never seen Mr. Cowper, but he had heard him frequently spoken of by the companies that had called at his house, and therefore when Sam

[7] Vol. ii. p. 282.

[8] More will be said of both these amiable men in the notes to the Correspondence than could properly be introduced in his place.

[9] *To Lady* Hesketh, Aug. 9, 1788. [10] July 28, 1791.

would have paid for his breakfast, would take nothing from him. Who says that fame is only breath? On the contrary, it is good ale and cold beef into the bargain[11]."

Homer was now ready for the press. Upon receiving the list of subscribers from Johnson, Cowper saw how much he had been indebted to Hill's solicitation, and to Mrs. Hill's. Thanking them both for their friendly assistance, "it is," said he[12], "an illustrious catalogue, in respect of rank and title; but methinks I should have liked it as well had it been more numerous. The sum subscribed, however, will defray the expense of printing; which is as much as, in these unsubscribing days, I had any reason to promise myself. I devoutly second your droll wish, that the booksellers may contend about me. The more the better. Seven times seven, if they please; and let them fight with the fury of Achilles,

> Till every rubric-post be crimson'd o'er
> With blood of booksellers, in battle slain,
> For me, and not a periwig untorn."

Rose had been with him when he finished[13] translating the Odyssey, and the party at the lodge drank on that occasion "an unreluctant bumper to its success." Exactly twelve months afterwards, when the revision and transcription were completed, Johnson of Norfolk, as he used to call his young kinsman, happened to be his guest.

One book of the translation, on its passage from the bookseller's to General Cowper, had gone to the bottom of the Thames. "A storm overtook it on its way to Kingston, and it sunk, together with the whole cargo of the boat in which it was a passenger[14]." The strangeness of the mishap almost compensated for so trifling a loss: but now, as they were talking by the fireside, and perhaps calling to mind this incident, Cowper expressed a wish that he could hear of "some trusty body" going to London, to whose care he might consign his voluminous labours, the work of five years; "For I purpose," said he[15], "never to visit that city again myself, and should have been uneasy to have left a charge, of so much importance to me, altogether to the care of a stage-coachman. Johnny had no sooner heard my wish, than offering

[11] To Lady Hesketh, Feb. 13, 1791.
[12] Sept. 17, 1790.
[13] Sept. 1789.
[14] To Mr. Hill, Oct. 6, 1786.
[15] To Mrs. Bodham, Sept. 9, 1790.

himself to the service, he fulfilled it; and his offer was made in such terms, and accompanied with a countenance and manner expressive of so much alacrity, that unreasonable as I thought it at first to give him so much trouble, I soon found that I should mortify him by a refusal. He is gone, therefore, with a box full of poetry, of which I think nobody will plunder him. He has only to say what it is, and there is no commodity, I think, a freebooter would covet less."

Cowper was well satisfied with the success of his subscription. All the Scotch Universities subscribed; for this he was obliged to the aid of Rose's friends in that country. His cousin Johnson procured at Cambridge a long list of colleges, and of the best names there; but some friend of Mr. Throckmorton's, who tried his influence at Oxford, received for answer that they subscribed to nothing. "It seems not a little extraordinary," said Cowper[16], "that persons so nobly patronized themselves on the score of literature, should resolve to give no encouragement to it in return. Should I find a fair opportunity to thank them hereafter, I will not neglect it.

> Could Homer come himself, distress'd and poor,
> And tune his harp at Redycina's door,
> The rich old vixen would exclaim, I fear,
> 'Begone! no tramper gets a farthing here.'"

To Cambridge he felt himself "much obliged, and much disposed to admire the liberality of spirit which had been shown there. Certainly," said he[17], "I had not deserved much favour of their hands, all things considered. But the cause of literature seems to have some weight with them, and to have superseded the resentment they might be supposed to entertain on the score of certain censures that you wot of."—"Pope's subscriptions did not amount, I think, to six hundred; and mine will not fall very short of five: Noble doings! at a time of day when Homer has no news to tell us, and when all other comforts of life having arisen in price, poetry has of course fallen. I call it a comfort of life: it is so to others, but to myself it is become even a necessary[18]."

Nothing now remained but to agree upon terms with the publisher. "I am glad," said he to Lady Hesketh[19], "that Johnson waited on you, and glad that he acquitted himself

[16] To Mrs. Throckmorton, April 1, 1791.
[17] To Mr. Johnson, April 6.
[18] *To Mr. Rose*, April 29.
[19] June 26, 1791.

so well in your presence; glad too that he likes my prose, and filled with wonder that he likes my letters, because to him I have hardly sent any but letters of jobation. I verily believe that, though a bookseller, he has in him the soul of a gentleman. Such strange combinations sometimes happen, and such a one may have happened in his instance. We shall see." In his next letter[20], however, he says, "I am not much better pleased with that dealer in authors than yourself. His first proposal, which was to pay me with my own money, or, in other words, to get my copy for nothing, not only dissatisfied but hurt me; implying, as I thought, the meanest opinion possible of my labour: for that for which an intelligent man will give nothing, can be worth nothing. The consequence was, that my spirits sank considerably below par, and have but just begun to recover themselves. His second offer, which is to pay all expenses and give me one thousand pounds next midsummer, leaving the copyright still in my hands, is more liberal. With this offer I have closed."

The work was published in the summer of 1791, and Cowper received from his friends in all quarters good reports of its reception. Well pleased as he was with these fair promises of success, his feelings were more highly gratified by its becoming the means of renewing his intercourse with one who had formerly been among the most intimate of his friends. After repeating to his cousin the favourable accounts which had reached him, he said to her[21], "But now, if thou hast the faculty of erecting thine ears, lift them into the air, first taking off thy cap, that they may have their highest possible elevation. Mrs. Unwin says, 'No;—do not tell her ladyship all; tell her only enough to raise her curiosity, that she may come the sooner to Weston to have it gratified. But I say, Yes;—I will tell her all: lest she should be overcharged, and burst by the way.

"The Chancellor and I, my dear, have had a correspondence on the subject of Homer. He had doubts, it seems, about the propriety of translating him in blank verse, and wrote to Henry to tell him so, adding a translation of his own in rhyme of the speech of Achilles to Phœnix, in the ninth book, and referring him to me, who, he said, could elevate it and polish it, and give it the tone of Homer.

[20] July 11. [21] Aug. 30.

Henry sent this letter to me, and I answered it in one to his lordship; but not meddling with his verses, for I remembered what happened between Gil Blas and the Archbishop of Toledo. His lordship sent me two sheets in reply, filled with arguments in favour of rhyme, which I was to answer, if I could; and containing another translation of the same passage, only in blank verse, leaving it to me to give it rhyme, to make it close and faithful and poetical. All this I performed as best I could, and yesterday I heard from him again. In this last letter he says, 'I am clearly convinced that Homer may be best translated *without* rhyme, and that you have succeeded in the passages that I have looked into.'

"Such is the candour of a wise man, and a real scholar. I would to heaven that all prejudiced persons were like him! I answered this letter immediately: and here, I suppose, our correspondence ends."

He was now idle for awhile, both on account of his eyes, and because he knew not to what to attach himself. But neither his friends nor his bookseller were willing that he should long remain so. "Many different plans and projects," said he[22], "are recommended to me. Some call aloud for original verse, others for more translation, and others for other things. Providence, I hope, will direct me in my choice; for other guide I have none, nor wish for another." Little more than a month elapsed before he informed his correspondents that he had been invited to a new literary engagement, and had not refused it. "A Milton," said he[23], "that is to rival, and if possible to exceed in splendour, Boydell's Shakespeare, is in contemplation, and I am in the editor's office. Fuseli is the painter. My business will be to select notes from others, and to write original notes, to translate the Latin and Italian poems, and to give a correct text. I shall have years allowed me to do it in."

He had perused Dr. Johnson's Life of Milton with that displeasure which all readers feel in proportion as they admire Milton, either in his poetical or his political character. Cowper admired him in both; on the first, no man was more competent to form an opinion, and scarcely any one could be more incompetent on the second; for no one who reads history at all, had read less: Mrs. Macauley was good authority with him. In some degree, too, he had been prepared to

[22] *To Mr. Johnson*, August 9, 1791. [23] To Mr. Rose, September 14.

entertain his bookseller's proposal, by having recently perused Milton's Latin poems with more attention than he had ever given to them before: "but these," said he, writing to Mr. Bagot[24], "I must make the subject of some future letters, in which it will be ten to one that your friend, Samuel Johnson, gets another slap or two at the hands of your humble servant. Pray read them yourself, and with as much attention as I did; then read the Doctor's remarks, if you have them, and then tell me what you think of both. It will be pretty sport for you on such a day as this, which is the fourth that we have had of almost incessant rain." And he entered the more readily into the project, because, when the two volumes of his poems turned out to be of considerable value, the publisher, to whom he had given them, would have allowed him to resume the gift. It was a gift which, in Cowper's circumstances, ought not to have been made; and indeed it appears strange that the business should have been managed for him so incautiously by both his friends; for though Mr. Unwin was not conversant in such transactions, Mr. Newton was. Sensible as he now was of their improvidence, he chose still to be bound by it; but the offer, and the farther pleasure which he felt from "subsequent proofs of liberality in Johnson's conduct[25]," disposed him to concur in his project concerning Milton, though he had at first from diffidence declined it. Accordingly he wrote to him[26], saying, "I have at length brought myself to something like a hope that I may, perhaps, prove equal to this business, and in consequence have resolved to attempt it, but must depend on you for my implements. Newton's edition I have, but have nothing more."

Mrs. Unwin, who knew from sorrowful experience how necessary some such occupation was to keep his mind from relapsing into its old and rooted disease, was especially pleased when this engagement was concluded. Communicating it to one of his Norfolk cousins, Mrs. Ball, she says[27], "ever since the close of his translation I have had many anxious thoughts how he would spend the advancing winter. Had he followed either of the three professions in his earlier days, he might have been not only laying the foundation, but also raising the fabric of a distinguished character, and have

[24] May 2, 1791.
[25] Hayley, vol. iii. p. 3.
[26] Sept. 6, 1791.
[27] Oct. 25, 1791.

spent the remaining portion of his life in endeavouring to maintain it. But the life of a mere gentleman very few, or any, are equal to support with credit to themselves, or comfort to their friends. But a gracious Providence has dissipated my fears on that head. After a warm and strong solicitation, he has been prevailed upon to stand forth as an editor of the most splendid and magnificent edition of Milton that ever was offered to the public. His engagement is to translate all the Latin and Italian poems, to select the most approved notes of his predecessors in that line, and to add elucidations and annotations on the text as he sees proper. Fuseli is to furnish paintings for the thirty copper-plates, and Johnson, the bookseller, has taken upon himself to provide the first artists for engraving. This work will take your cousin, upon his own computation, about two years."

Some of Cowper's friends, however, regretted that he should have pledged himself for two years "to comment and translate;" and it seems as if he himself after a while looked on with little satisfaction to the editorial part of his undertaking. He says to Mr. Bagot, "as to Milton, the die is cast. I am engaged, have bargained with Johnson, and cannot recede. I should otherwise have been glad to do as you advise, to make the translation of his Latin and Italian poems, part of another volume, for with such an addition I have nearly as much verse in my budget as would be required for the purpose[28]." And in answer to Hurdis, he writes, "I am much obliged to you for wishing that I were employed in some original work rather than in translation. To tell the truth, I am of your mind; and unless I could find another Homer, I shall promise, I believe and vow, when I have done with Milton, never to translate again. But my veneration for our great countryman is equal to what I feel for the Grecian, and consequently I am happy, and feel myself honourably employed whatever I I do for Milton[29]."

It was not for want of original subjects that he had engaged in this undertaking. Lady Hesketh, taking up apparently a thought which Paoli, as reported by Boswell[30], had thrown

[28] Dec. 5, 1791. [29] Dec. 10.

[30] Dining at General Paoli's, Johnson said, "The grand object of travelling is to see the shores of the Mediterranean. On those shores *were the four great* empires of the world, the Assyrian, the Persian, the

out in conversation, proposed to him the Mediterranean for a topic. He replied, "Unless I were a better historian than I am, there would be no proportion between the theme and my ability. It seems, indeed, not to be so properly a subject for one poem, as for a dozen[31]." Mr. Buchanan, the curate of Ravenstone, ("a little sequestered village within the distance of an easy walk from Weston,") observed to him, that no poet, ancient or modern, had expressly treated on the four divisions of human life,—infancy, youth, manhood, and old age; and he offered for his consideration a brief sketch, with the hope that he might be induced to work upon it. It pleased Cowper so well, that he requested him to draw out his thoughts more at length; and in reply to the second sketch expressed a full determination to undertake the subject. "My dear sir," said he, "you have sent me a beautiful poem, wanting nothing but metre. I would to Heaven that you would give it that requisite yourself; for he who could make the sketch, cannot but be well qualified to finish. But if you will not, I will; provided always, nevertheless, that God gives me ability, for it will require no common share to do justice to your conceptions[32]."

Accordingly he began upon this theme, and long cherished the thoughts of pursuing it, expecting, as it appears, to produce a poem of about the same length as the Task. But another subject had taken stronger possession of his mind,—an Oak in Yardley Chase, which was within reach of his walks, and was believed to be as old as the Norman conquest. He never bestowed more labour on any of his compositions than upon the commencement of a poem upon this tree; nor did he ever labour more successfully. No hint of his intention was ever given to any of his friends; this was that he might have the pleasure of surprising them with it; and it may be supposed that he looked to its completion with more confidence, because it would probably not have extended beyond

Grecian, and the Roman. All our religion, almost all our law, almost all our arts, almost all that sets us above savages, has come to us from the shores of the Mediterranean." The General observed, that THE MEDITERRANEAN would be a noble subject for a poem."—*Boswell*, vol. vi. p. 154. Ed. 1835.

A noble subject indeed,—but about as practicable for a poem as for a panorama.

[31] July 11, 1791. [32] May 11, 1791.

a few hundred lines. But his engagement with Milton engrossed him altogether; and when he looked into the task of commenting, his spirits began to fail. "I seem," he said, "to fear more the labour to which it calls me, than any great difficulty with which it is likely to be attended. To the labours of versifying I have no objection, but to the labours of criticism I am new, and apprehend that I shall find them wearisome. Should that be the case I shall be dull, and must be contented to share the censure of being so, with almost all the commentators that have ever existed[33]." The more he considered this engagement, the more irksome it appeared to him. "How often," said he, "do I wish, in the course of the day, that I could be employed once more in poetry, and how often of course that this Miltonic trap had never caught me!"—"That ill-fated work, impracticable in itself, has made every thing else impracticable[34]."

But a melancholy change had taken place in Cowper's domestic circumstances, and in his state of mind, before he thus repented altogether of his engagement. When it was made, Mrs. Unwin, though she had not recovered from the effects of her fall, was still able to take thought for him, and contribute to his comfort, and bear a cheerful part in society. In the same letter wherein she communicates his arrangement concerning the Milton to her Norfolk friends, she said, "Another capital pleasure we are now rejoicing in. Dear Lady Hesketh arrived at Weston this very day sevennight, accompanied with her ever-attendant train, fine sense, good temper, affectionate cordiality, and everpleasing vivacity."—It was the last visit in which she either found or communicated cheerfulness at Weston Lodge. About two months after her arrival, Mrs. Unwin was seized with a giddiness, and must have fallen with her chair, if Cowper, on whom she called for help, had not been just in time to save her. The giddiness, though with some abatement, lasted the whole day, and was attended with other very alarming symptoms, so that she kept her bed for many days, and her chamber for some weeks. In writing to inform Rose of this, whose intended visit at Christmas was thereby prevented, Cowper says, "she has been my faithful and affectionate nurse for many years, and consequently has a claim on all my attentions. She has

[33] *To Mr. Hurdis*, Feb. 21, 1792. [34] To Hayley, Dec. 26, 1792.

them, and will have them as long as she wants them, which will probably be, at the least, a considerable time to come. I feel the shock, as you may suppose, in every nerve. God grant that there may be no repetition of it! Another such a shock upon her would, I think, overset me completely; but at present I hold up bravely[35]."

Her gradual amendment seemed to give him reason for hoping, that as the spring advanced, she might be perfectly restored to health; though he was aware that they had both "reached a time of life when heavy blows, if not fatal, are at least long felt." Spring came, but it took from him more than it brought. At the beginning of March he writes to Mr. Newton,—"All our little world is going to London,—the gulf that swallows most of our good things, and, like a bad stomach, too often assimilates them to itself. Our neighbours at the Hall go thither to-morrow. Mr. and Mrs. Throckmorton, as we lately called them, but now Sir John and my Lady, are no longer inhabitants here, but henceforth of Bucklands, in Berkshire. I feel the loss of them, and shall feel it, since kinder or more friendly treatment I never can receive at any hands, than I have always found at theirs. But it has long been a foreseen change, and was, indeed, almost daily expected long before it happened. The desertion of the Hall, however, will not be total. The second brother, George, now Mr. Courtenay[36], intends to reside there; and with him, as with his elder brother, I have always been on terms the most agreeable.

"Such is this variable scene: so variable, that, had the reflections I sometimes make upon it a permanent influence, I should tremble at the thought of a new connexion; and, to be out of the reach of its mutability, lead almost the life of a hermit. It is well with those who, like you, have God for their companion! Death cannot deprive them of Him, and He changes not the place of his abode. Other changes, therefore, to them are all supportable; and what you say of your own experience is the strongest possible proof of it. Had you lived without God, you could not have endured the loss you mention. May He preserve me from a similar one; at least, till he shall be pleased to draw me to himself again! Then, if ever that day come, it will make me equal to my burthen; but at present I can bear nothing well."

[35] Dec. 21, 1791.

[36] And since, Sir George Throckmorton.

Lady Hesketh went about a week after the Throckmortons; and when Rose, who came to cheer them for a few days after her departure, had returned to London, Cowper and Mrs. Unwin were "once more reduced to their dual state." It was no longer good for them to be in that state, though he would fain have thought so. "There are those in the world," said he[37], "whom we love, and whom we are happy to see; but we are happy likewise in each other, and so far independent of our fellow-mortals, as to be able to pass our time comfortably without them:—as comfortably, at least, as Mrs. Unwin's frequent indispositions, and my no less frequent troubles of mind, will permit. When I am much distressed, any company but hers distresses me more, and makes me doubly sensible of my sufferings; though sometimes, I confess, it falls out otherwise; and by the help of more general conversation, I recover that elasticity of mind which is able to resist the pressure.—On the whole, I believe I am situated exactly as I should wish to be, were my situation to be determined by my own election; and am denied no comfort that is compatible with the total absence of the chief of all."

At this time, when they most needed it, a circumstance arising out of the engagement concerning Milton, gave a salutary excitement to Cowper's spirits. While Fuseli was employed upon his Milton gallery, and Cowper proceeding with his version of the Latin and Italian poems, Boydell also had projected a magnificent edition of the same poet, and had engaged Westall to make designs for it, and Hayley to write a life of the author. "This squabble between Fuseli and Boydell," said Cowper[38], "does not interest me at all. Let it terminate as it may, I have only to perform my job, and leave the event to be decided by the combatants.

Suave mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis,
E terrâ magnum alterius spectare laborem."—Lucretius.

A paragraph, however, in the newspapers represented that the rivalry between the publishers was participated by the writers, and that Hayley and Cowper were both emulously engaged in writing lives of Milton. Now Cowper himself was not more exempt from any emulous feeling than Hayley, who in all his feelings was one of the most generous of men; and the paragraph had the singular effect of leading to a friendship between

[37] *To Mr. Newton,* March 18, 1792. [38] To Mr. Bagot, Dec. 5, 1791.

L. For Hayley addressed a sonnet to his reputed competitor
i this occasion.

> Cowper! delight of all who justly prize
> The splendid magic of a sound divine,
> That sweetly tempts the enlightened soul to rise,
> As sun-beams lure an eagle to the sun.
> Poet! to whom I feel my heart incline
> As to a friend endeared by virtue's ties:
> Ne'er shall my name in pride's contentious line
> With hostile emulation cope with thine.
> No! let us meet with kind fraternal aim,
> Where Milton's shrine invites a votive faming.
> With thee I share a passion for his fame,
> His zeal for truth, his scorn of venal blame
> But thou hast rarer gifts: to thee belong
> His harp of highest tone, his sanctity of song.

his sonnet he enclosed to Cowper with the following letter:

AR SIR, Eartham, near Chichester, Feb. 7, 1792.

I have often been tempted by affectionate admiration of
poetry, to trouble you with a letter; but I have repeatedly
ked myself, in recollecting that the vanity of believing our-
s distantly related in spirit to a man of genius, is but a
y apology for intruding on his time.

hough I resisted my desire of professing myself your friend.
I might not disturb you with intrusive familiarity, I can-
resist a desire equally affectionate, of disclaiming an idea
ch I am told is imputed to me, of considering myself, on
cent occasion, as an antagonist to you. Allow me, there-
, to say, I was solicited to write a Life of Milton, for Boy-
and Nicol, before I had the least idea that you and Mr.
eli were concerned in a project similar to theirs. When I
heard of your intention, I was apprehensive that we might
esignedly thwart each other; but on seeing your proposals,
n agreeably persuaded, that our respective labours will be
rom clashing; as it is your design to illustrate Milton with
ries of notes, and I only mean to execute a more candid
of him than his late biographer has given us, upon a plan
will, I flatter myself, be particularly pleasing to those who
the author as we do.

s to the pecuniary interest of those persons who venture
e sums in expensive decorations of Milton, I am persuaded
expanding glory will support them all. Every splendid

edition, where the merits of the pencil are in any degree worthy of the poet, will, I think, be secure of success. I wish it cordially to all; as I have great affection for the arts, and a sincere regard for those whose talents reflect honour upon them.

To you, my dear sir, I have a grateful attachment, for the infinite delight which your writings have afforded me; and if, in the course of your work, I have any opportunity to serve or oblige you, I shall seize it with that friendly spirit which has impelled me at present to assure you both in prose and rhyme, that I am,

Your very cordial admirer, W. HAYLEY.

P. S.—I wrote the enclosed sonnet on being told that our names had been idly printed together, in a newspaper, *as hostile competitors.* Pray forgive its poetical defects, for its affectionate sincerity.

From my ignorance of your address, I send this to your booksellers, by a person commissioned to place my name in the list of your subscribers; and let me add, if you ever wish to form a new collection of names for any similar purpose, I entreat you to honour me so far as to rank *mine*, of your own accord, among those of your sincerest friends—Adieu!

Having written the letter, and transcribed the sonnet, Hayley hesitated whether or not to intrude on one whose habits were even more retired than his own, by sending them. His friend, Dr. Warner, overruled this doubt; Cowper, he said, would surely be pleased; and, as he was going to London, he offered to deposit the packet with his publisher, Johnson. There it remained six weeks, to Hayley's no little mortification, and to the vexation of Cowper when he received it at last. "What, indeed," says he[39], "could he imagine less, than that I meant by such an obstinate silence, to tell him that I valued neither him, nor his praises, nor his proffered friendship? in short, that I considered him a rival, and therefore, like a true author, hated and despised him." Of course the letter was answered on the very evening that it came to hand. The only part of that answer which has appeared is the following passage, which Hayley said he had an honest pride in transcribing[40]. "I rejoice that you are employed to do justice to

[39] To Lady Hesketh, March 25, 1791.
[40] Appendix to Cowper's Homer, p. 384.

the character of a man, perhaps the chief of all, who have done honour to our country, and whose very name I reverence. Here we shall not clash, or interfere with each other, for a Life of Milton is no part of my bargain. In short we will cope with each other in nothing, but that affection which you avow for me, unworthy of it as I am, and which your character and writings, and especially your kind letter, have begotten in my heart for you. Every remark of yours on Milton will be highly valued by me." Hayley was equally prompt in his reply; "he is now," said Cowper, "convinced that I love him, as indeed I do; and I account him the chief acquisition that my own verse has ever procured me."

Their correspondence now became frequent, and was carried on with characteristic warmth on both sides. Hayley was invited to Weston, and pressed to visit his unseen friend there, in May. "I will endeavour," said Cowper to Lady Hesketh[41], "to greet him with a countenance that shall not stiffen him into free-stone, but cannot be answerable for my success. It will depend, in some measure, on the countenance that he presents himself; for whether I will or not, I am always a physiognomist, and if I dislike a man's looks, am sure to assume such as he will find equally disagreeable. But I hope better things from my friend Hayley. It seldom happens that a person so amiable in his disposition, is very Gorgonian in his aspect."

Two persons so well inclined to like each other, and already intellectually acquainted, were not likely to be disappointed at their meeting. Hayley was then in his forty-seventh year; time had given to his fine and animated countenance[42] a thoughtful, and somewhat pensive air; but his disposition was buoyant and lively, and his manners as pleasing as they were warm, and not less cordial than pleasing. "Every body here," said Cowper, "has fallen in love with him, and wherever he goes every body must.—We have formed a friendship that I trust will last for life, and render us an edifying example for all future poets!" Hayley expressed his feelings

[41] April 26.

[42] Miss Seward says, in a letter to George Hardinge, "I am glad you like Hayley's countenance. How have I seen those fine eyes of his sparkle, and melt, and glow, as wit, compassion, or imagination had the ascendance in his mind."—*Letters*, vol. i. p. 351.

to his old friend, Romney. "*Carissimo Pittore*, said he, often have I wished to convey you by magic to my side, when you were not near me; but I believe I never wished it more ardently than I have done under this very kind poetical roof. You would be pleased here, as I am, and think with me, that my brother bard is one of the most interesting creatures in the world, from the powerful united influence of rare genius and singular misfortunes, with the additional charm of mild and engaging manners. Then as to the grand article of females, (for what is a scene without a woman in it?) here is a muse of seventy, that I perfectly idolize.—Here is a wonderful scene; it would affect you, I know, as it does me. Few things in life have given me such heartfelt satisfaction as my visit to this house; and the more so as my kind hosts seem to regard me as sent to them by Providence, for our general delight and advantage.—As to myself, I feel I have now found the thing I most wanted,—a congenial poetical spirit, willing to join with me in the most social and friendly cultivation of an art dear to us both, and particularly dear to us as the cement of friendship."

"My host," says Hayley, "though now in his sixty-first year, appeared as happily exempt from all the infirmities of advanced life, as friendship could wish him to be; and his more elderly companion, not materially oppressed by age, discovered a benevolent alertness of character, that seemed to promise a continuance of their domestic comfort. Their reception of me was kindness itself.—I was enchanted to find that the manners and conversation of Cowper resembled his poetry, charming by unaffected elegance, and the graces of a benevolent spirit. I looked with affectionate veneration and pleasure on the lady who having devoted her life and fortune to the service of this tender and sublime genius, in watching over him with maternal vigilance through many years of the darkest calamity, appeared to be now enjoying a reward justly due to the noblest exertions of friendship, in contemplating the health and the renown of the poet, whom she had the happiness to preserve.

"It seemed hardly possible to survey human nature in a more touching and a more satisfactory point of view.—Their tender attention to each other, their simple devout gratitude for the *mercies which* they had experienced together, and their con-

stant, but unaffected propensity to impress on the mind and heart of a new friend the deep sense which they incessantly felt, of their mutual obligations to each other, afforded me very singular gratification."

Hayley had not been with them many days, when on returning from a morning walk with his new friend, they were informed that Mrs. Unwin had had a paralytic stroke. Cowper ran to her, and came back in a state that alarmed Hayley in the highest degree for his senses. His first speech was wild in the extreme. "My answer," says Hayley, "was little less so; but it was addressed to the predominant fancy of my unhappy friend, and, with the blessing of Heaven, it produced an instantaneous calm in his troubled mind. From that moment he rested on my friendship with such mild and cheerful confidence, that his affectionate spirit regarded me as sent providentially to support him in a season of the severest affliction."

Their Olney apothecary would not allow that the attack in December had been paralytic. Cowper himself never doubted but that it was; that the present was so could not be dissembled, .. her speech was almost unintelligible, she was unable to move from place to place, or to keep her eyes open, and the use of the right hand and arm was lost. Hayley eagerly enquired if there was an electrical machine in the neighbourhood; and little as it could have been expected, an inhabitant of the village possessed just such a one as was wanted, which he had in part constructed himself. Hayley, from endeavouring at first to counteract by electricity a continual tendency to inflammation in his own eyes, had been used to try its remedial effects upon his country neighbours, often to no avail, but now and then with the happiest results. He tried it now upon Mrs. Unwin, and wrote also to his friend, Dr. Austin, for advice: before that advice could arrive, "this powerful though uncertain remedy" appeared to be of material service. She daily recovered a little strength and a little power of utterance; "but her amendment," said Cowper to Lady Hesketh, "is slow, as must be expected at her time of life, and in such a disorder: I am as well myself as you have ever known me in a time of much trouble, and even better. Hayley has been all in all to us on this very afflicting occasion. Love him, I charge you, dearly for my sake. Where could I

have found a man, except himself, who could have made himself so necessary to me in so short a time, that I absolutely know not how to live without him?" Lady Hesketh, on the first intelligence of this affliction, offered to come to them. He replied, "though happy, as you well know, to see you at all times, we have no need, and I trust shall have none, to trouble you with a journey made on purpose. Yet once again, I am willing and desirous to believe we shall be a happy trio at Weston; but unless necessity dictates a journey of charity, I wish all yours hither to be made for pleasure[43]."

Hayley left them in the beginning of June. There was then every appearance of progressive amendment in Mrs. Unwin, and the disposition of the patient herself afforded the best ground of hope. "It is a great blessing to us both," said Cowper, "that, poor feeble thing as she is, she has a most invincible courage, and a trust in God's goodness that nothing can shake. . . She always tells me she is better,—and will probably die with those very words upon her lips. They will be true then at least, for then she will be best of all." Their warm friend had urged them to visit him at Eartham, as soon as Mrs. Unwin should be able to take the journey; and as each hoped that such a change might be beneficial to the other, both were willing to think it possible that they might undertake what was to them so formidable a journey. A year before[44] he had said in reply to Hurdis's introductory letter, "We shall not, I hope, hereafter be known to each other as poets only, for your writings have made me ambitious of a nearer approach to you. Your door, however, will never be opened to me. My fate and fortune have combined with my natural disposition to draw a circle round me which I cannot pass; nor have I been more than thirteen miles from home these twenty years, and so far very seldom. But you are a younger man, and therefore may not be quite so immovable; in which case, should you choose at any time to move Weston-ward, you will always find me happy to receive you."—Now however the ardour of a new friendship, and the hope that Mrs. Unwin's recovery might be promoted by travelling and by change of air, roused him to a resolution of which he had fancied himself incapable; and he who during so many years had been as it were spell-bound within the purlieus of Olney, prepared for a journey to the south coast.

[43] *May 26, 1792.* [44] March 6, 1791.

CHAPTER XVI.

HAYLEY. COWPER'S VISIT TO EARTHAM. ROMNEY.

When Hayley left his own Memoirs for posthumous publication, he designated himself in the title as the Friend and Biographer of Cowper, having, no doubt, in mind Lord Brook's epitaph at Warwick; but honourable as in both instances such friendship must ever be deemed, both Hayley and Lord Brooke will be remembered also for merits of their own.

William Hayley, whose friendship for Cowper was in its consequences rewarded well, and well deserved the recompence which it obtained, was born at Chichester, in 1745. His father raised a company during that time of rebellion and threatened invasion; a baronetcy was offered him in acknowledgment of his patriotic exertions; this he had prudence enough to decline, as a rank which it was beyond his means to support; but the military character which he had assumed led him into expenses that impaired his fortune, and into habits of intemperance that brought him to an early grave. The eldest of his two children was laid beside him two years afterwards in Eartham churchyard, having died of inoculated smallpox. A more deplorable fate soon threatened the surviving child; but by the devoted care and prayers of his mother he was restored from a disease which the physicians pronounced would leave him, if he escaped with life, a deformed and helpless idiot. It left, however, no other inconvenience than a slight lameness. When he was sufficiently recovered he was placed at Eton; his mind, he says, always "recoiled with emotions of indignation and disgust from the recollection of the first years that he passed there;" but his time was not ill spent; and his early predilection for poetry was encouraged by Roberts, then one of the ushers and afterwards provost, himself a poet[1] of the same respectable class as the author of Leonidas and the Athenaid.

[1] Dr. Roberts's Judah Restored was one of the first books that I ever possessed. It was given me by a lady whom I must ever gratefully and affectionately remember as the kindest friend of my boyhood. I read it often then, *and can still recur to it* with satisfaction: and perhaps I owe

After remaining six years at Eton, he gave up his chance of a fellowship at King's College, because he preferred the easier discipline of Trinity Hall. There he entered in 1763, the year in which Cowper retired from the world; and there he amused himself with pursuing his classical studies, and took lessons in drawing and Italian. Three years were thus not unprofitably spent; he then left Cambridge without taking a degree, and entered his name at the Middle Temple, without any serious intention of studying the law. For he soon convinced himself that nature had never intended him for a barrister; and flattered himself with an expectation that his passion for poetry, and particularly for the drama, might by made the means of enriching him in a far more agreeable way.

He remembered, he says, that Dryden had once engaged to produce four new plays every year, and therefore thought himself modest in his purpose of composing only two in the same space of time, and moderate in his calculation of deriving only a thousand a year from his dramatic profits.

Such baseless expectations might have ruined any one who had not, like Hayley, a fair inheritance on which to rest; but provided as he was with that substantial gift of fortune, he could smile at the recollection of his utter disappointment, and never had cause to regret that he had not applied himself to some professional pursuit. His excellent mother had no other wish than to promote his happiness in any way which he thought best. She had taken a house in London, because he liked a London residence; when he married, in 1769, she enabled him to make a settlement upon his wife, by giving up her own; she continued to reside with them in town as long as they preferred London for their place of abode; and she removed with them into the country in 1774, at the close of which year she died, fortunate in not living to witness the commencement of that domestic infelicity, the possibility of which she had but too much reason to apprehend. This consideration must have consoled her son in his regret that the high reputation which he afterwards obtained came too late to gladden that heart which of all others would have most rejoiced in it. For she had kindled and fostered in him the love of poetry, and encouraged his literary ambition as he grew up; and

something to the plain dignity of its style, which is suited to the subject, and every where bears the stamp of good sense and careful erudition. To acknowledge obligations of this kind is both a pleasure and a duty.

though not without fear, had not opposed his purpose when, disregarding the ordinary pursuits of fortune, he resolved to make literature at once his business and his recreation. He has said of himself that "his contempt of money often rose to romantic excess, and sometimes led him into serious inconvenience: but in his estimation books, retirement, and friendship were the real treasures of human life. In all these he was abundantly rich; and he justly reckoned his quick and constant relish for them all a blessing in itself that called for incessant and cheerful gratitude to the Giver of all good[2]."

As a dramatic writer Hayley was unsuccessful, though it had been his first ambition to excel in that line, and though several of his pieces were brought upon the stage. One luckless tragedy, which he had published without the hope of its being acted, had the singular fortune of being represented at both the London theatres at the same time, condemned at the one, and received with applause at the other. The manager of Covent Garden said to him in a letter at this time, "I shall regard it as one of the most fortunate events of my mimic life, if I can fairly bring you to a determination of being a dramatic author; I mean *for the stage*, which certainly holds out much greater rewards of fame, delight, and profit than any other species of literary composition[3]." No wonder that he continued to mistake his own powers when he was thus encouraged in the highest quarter, and when the rival managers contended for a play which carried with it, in its detestable subject, its own certain condemnation. But all Hayley's tragedies were deficient in the essentials of dramatic poetry; and his comedies were written upon the French model, in rhyme. These he intended for a private theatre. Colman[4],

[2] Memoirs, vol. i. p. 333. [3] Memoirs, vol. i. p. 396.

[4] "A comedy in rhyme," said he, "is a bold attempt; yet when so well executed as in the present instance, it would, I think, be received with favour, especially on a stage of a genius somewhat similar to that of a private theatre, for which they were professedly written*." Henderson, after reading it aloud in his admirable manner, was of a different opinion: "he admired it exceedingly, but thought the rhyme unfit for a public stage, as it is so difficult to recite without an unpleasing monotony." Gibbon called it "the boldest of poetical attempts, but declared himself astonished and delighted by the happiness of its execution."

The Monthly Review (vol. lxx. April, 1784,) says, "the comedies are

* Memoirs, vol. i. p. 314, 293, 295.

however, brought out one of them at the Haymarket, and it met with some success.

But though Hayley mistook his own powers when he attempted dramatic composition, he made the best use of them in composing his Essays on Painting, on History, and on Epic Poetry, in the form of Epistles in verse, addressed respectively to Romney, Gibbon, and Mason. With the painter he was already intimate, and the hope of contributing to make his friend's genius better known to the public, was the chief motive which had induced him to choose that branch of the arts for his subject. The Essay on History procured for him Gibbon's friendship; the other Essay drew from Mason a letter of handsome acknowledgment; but when the two poets met, though it was with the mutual desire of being pleased, Hayley[5] felt nothing but what was repulsive in the cold manner and sa-

in rhyme,—start not reader, *in rhyme:* but such rhyme, so familiar, so easy, so flowing, that prose itself can scarcely appear more natural, more convenient for the purposes of the dialogue, or the business of the drama: like the ancient iambic, recommended by Aristotle and characterised by Horace as the measure peculiarly suited to the scene, *natum rebus agendis* —*Measure* in comedy is to this day agreeable to the public ear in the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, Jonson, and Shakespeare. *Rhyme*, too, in the plays of Hayley may not only be endured, but applauded.—Yet we should certainly have revolted most strongly against the idea, had not the author illustrated his precept by his own example.—Let Hayley then, and those few who have the talents of Hayley, *by special license* write comedies in rhyme: but let them not tell us that such a comedy may be still more entertaining than a comedy of equal merit in other points, which confines itself to prose." "Time, the most infallible test of literary opinions, (we use Mr. Hayley's own words,) has proved the contrary."

[5] "His cheerful spirit was surprised and concerned to find a man of Mason's acknowledged mental powers so shaken in his manly frame by age and disappointments; and so soured in his temper, that, according to his own declaration to his friendly eulogist, he received little or no pleasure from public praise, and much vexation from the coarse censure and malignant sneers in which the reptiles of literature are apt in all times to indulge themselves against those successful authors, whose pre-eminence they cannot patiently endure. Of such abuse, indeed, Mason had a full share, and probably the more for having been supposed the author of much anonymous but celebrated sarcastic poetry. In conversing upon life and literature, he showed many signs of his having suffered his own enjoyments to be sadly overclouded by ebullitions of a spleenful spirit. The conference excited in Hayley more pity than admiration: but the two poets parted with many expressions of reciprocal regard."—*Hayley's Memoirs,* vol. i. pp. 276, 318.

turnine aspect of one whom he had hoped to find as ardent and as open hearted as himself.

The principal design in these Epistles was to present "a general view of the art in question, with a just and animating character of its most eminent professors. There is, I believe," says he, "a season of life in which poems of this nature may be read with the happiest effect. The first, and perhaps the most important step towards forming a great artist in any line, is to inspire a youth of quick feelings with an enthusiastic passion for some particular art, and with an ingenuous delight in the glory of its heroes.—Such was the end that I proposed to myself in these Essays; for as delicate or inconstant health, and the love of literary retirement, have prevented me from serving the community in scenes of active life, I have considered it as particularly incumbent on me to endeavour at least, in my poetical pursuits, to promote the interests of society.—I am aware that such an idea is open to much raillery, as vain and romantic; but poetry is an art which conduces so little to the private emolument and advantage of those who devote even a life to it, that they ought, I think, to be indulged in such prospects, however chimerical, as arise only from a benevolent vanity[6]."

Whether or not any of Hayley's Essays have had the specific effect which he hoped to produce, they imparted, by help of the copious notes wherewith he elucidated them, much information in an agreeable form: his translated specimens of Dante, which were introduced in these notes, revived among us a taste for the Italian poets; and Spanish literature had been so long and so utterly neglected in this country, that he may be truly said to have introduced the knowledge of it to his contemporaries. When Lord Holland published his Life of Lope de Vega, he sent a copy of it to Hayley, with a letter, saying that he had been induced to learn Spanish by what he had read of Ercilla in those notes.

Perhaps the Essays were read more for the sake of the notes than of the poetry; but the poetry was praised in the highest terms. The author was spoken of as a new star in the poetical hemisphere, whose first appearance had been noted with delight, and who continued to shine if possible with increasing splendour. "Almost unrivalled excellence"

[6] Preface to his *Poems* and Plays, 1785.

was discovered in his choice and application of similes, which it was said had ever been considered one great test of the poet's art; and his sentiments were pronounced to be "such as could only be expected from an imagination truly creative, regulated by a judgment critically exact." Critics talked of "his inimitable pen," and the "admirable truth and precision of pencil, which so eminently marked the animated portraits of this masterly writer." It was said of him that he had "the fire and the invention of Dryden, the wit and ease of Prior, and that if his versification was a degree less polished than Pope's, it was more various:" "that he had studiously avoided the meretricious ornaments of fantastic and far-fetched epithets; and that his ideas, though conceived in the finest frenzy of imagination, were on every occasion expressed with perspicuity, elegance, and the chastest simplicity."

"It may be remarked," said a reviewer, "of this writer, that he is almost the only poet, of the present day at least, who has had the courage, (for such is the libertinism of the world that it must be called so,) to avow, in his poetical capacity, a belief in revelation. His example is a sufficient proof, (notwithstanding a respectable opinion to the contrary,) that the great truths of religion, though incapable of embellishment, will admit of poetical application, and may be introduced both with force and propriety." This was injurious to Hayley's contemporaries: it required no courage in those days, nor has it, God be thanked! in any age, for an author in this country, whether in prose or verse, to declare his belief in revealed religion. I know not, indeed, whether any poet of that generation, except Churchill, ventured to intimate,.. for even Churchill did not venture to proclaim,.. his unbelief. The praise, however, which was thus bestowed on Hayley, would have been his due, if it had not been unjustly and invidiously enhanced; and Cowper was no doubt on that score the more readily disposed to reciprocate his proffered friendship.

There is one passage in Hayley's poems with which Cowper would sympathize deeply in all its parts.

> For me who feel, whene'er I touch the lyre,
> My talents sink below my proud desire;
> Who often doubt, and sometimes credit give,
> When friends assure me that my verse will live;
> Whom health, too tender for the bustling throng,
> *Led into* pensive shade and soothing song;

Whatever fortune my unpolished rhymes
May meet, in present or in future times,
Let the blest art my grateful thoughts employ,
Which soothes my sorrow and augments my joy;
Whence lonely peace, and social pleasure springs,
And friendship, dearer than the smile of kings.
While keener poets, querulously proud,
Lament the ill of poesy aloud,
And magnify, with irritation's zeal,
Those common evils we too strongly feel,
The envious comment, and the subtle style
Of specious slander, stabbing with a smile;
Frankly I wish to make her blessings known,
And think those blessings for her ills atone;
Nor would my honest pride that praise forego
Which makes Malignity yet more my foe.

If heart-felt pain e'er led me to accuse
The dangerous gift of the alluring Muse,
'Twas in the moment when my verse imprest
Some anxious feelings on a Mother's breast.

O thou fond Spirit, who with pride hath smiled,
And frown'd with fear, on thy poetic child,
Pleased, yet alarm'd, when in his boyish time,
He sigh'd in numbers, or he laugh'd in rhyme;
While thy kind cautions warn'd him to beware
Of Penury, the bard's perpetual snare;
Marking the early temper of his soul,
Careless of wealth, nor fit for base control:
Thou tender Saint, to whom he owes much more
Than ever Child to Parent owed before;
In life's first season, when the fever's flame
Shrunk to deformity his shrivell'd frame,
And turn'd each fairer image in his brain
To blank confusion and her crazy train,
'Twas thine, with constant love, through lingering years
To bathe thy Idiot Orphan in thy tears;
Day after day, and night succeeding night,
To turn incessant to the hideous sight,
And frequent watch, if haply at thy view,
Departed Reason might not dawn anew;
Though medicinal art, with pitying care
Could lēnd no aid to save thee from despair,
Thy fond maternal heart adhered to Hope and Prayer
Nor pray'd in vain; thy child, from Powers above,
Received the sense to feel and bless thy love.
O might he thence receive the happy skill,
And force proportioned to his ardent will,
With Truth's unfading radiance to emblaze
Thy virtues, *worthy of* immortal praise!

Nature, who decked thy form with beauty's flowers,
Exhausted on thy soul her finer powers;
Taught it with all her energy to feel
Love's melting softness, friendship's fervid zeal,
The generous purpose and the active thought,
With charity's diffusive spirit fraught.
There all the best of mental gifts she placed,
Vigour of judgment, purity of taste,
Superior parts without their spleenful leaven,
Kindness to Earth, and confidence in Heaven.
While my fond thoughts o'er all thy merits roll,
Thy praise thus gushes from my filial soul;
Nor will the public with harsh rigour blame
This my just homage to thy honour'd name;
To please that public, if to please be mine,
Thy virtues train'd me,—let the praise be thine.

Essay on Epic Poetry, ep. iv.[7]

Cowper and Hayley, as they resembled each other in having withdrawn at about the same time of life into retirement, and in the pleasure and consolation which they derived from their poetical pursuits, had also many points of coincidence in their general views and feelings. Different as the character of their poetry is, each aimed always at a moral end. "It seems," said Hayley, when he published the most fanciful and the most fortunate of his works,.. "It seems to be a kind of duty incumbent on those who devote themselves to poetry, to raise, if possible, the dignity of a declining art, by making it as beneficial to life and manners as the limits of composition, and the character of modern times will allow. The ages indeed are past, in which the song of the Poet was idolized for its miraculous effects; yet a poem, intended to promote the cultivation of good humour, may still, perhaps, be fortunate enough to prove of some little service to society in general; or if this idea may be thought too chimerical and romantic by sober reason, it is at least one of those pleasing and innocent delusions, in which a poetical enthusiast may be safely indulged."—"His observation," he said, "of the various effects of spleen on the female character, induced him to believe that

[7] Of this Essay it is that Gibbon says in one of his Letters "I hope you like Mr. Hayley's poem. He rises with his subject; and, since Pope's death, I am satisfied that England has not seen so happy a mixture of strong sense and flowing numbers. Are you not delighted with his address to his mother? I understand that she was in plain prose every thing *which he speaks of* her in verse."—*Miscellaneous Works*, vol. ii. p. 259.

ıight render an important service to social life, if his y could induce his young and fair readers to cultivate the e qualities of the heart, and maintain a constant flow of humour. With this view he composed his "Tri- ıs of Temper," and he had once the gratification to hear "the very good and sensible mother of a large family," she was indebted to that poem for a complete reformation e character of her eldest daughter, who, from being per- and intractable, was rendered by her ambition to imitate ıa, the most docile and dutiful of children. This book ıed its popularity more than twenty years, being one of which were chiefly purchased for presents, and for ı, therefore, there was a continual demand. It may be ted whether, among all those by which it has been super- l, there has been any so likely to produce upon readers at a in time of life, when the mind most easily receives its bias, od an effect.

at poem raised Hayley's reputation to its highest pitch; m, as the most popular of living poets, the laureateship 'graciously offered" upon Warton's death, and was "as ously declined in a few verses to Mr. Pitt on the occa- :" and he had a more remarkable proof of his own rity, when upon going to a nursery garden near London, offering to pay for a plant which he had chosen, the nur- ıan, Mr. Lee, having discovered who he was, refused to t the money, and said, "Sir, you are a very great man, hom I shall be particularly happy to show every little y in my power. I am sorry that my lame foot, and your , prevent my making up a nosegay for the lady in the car- ,"

s reputation, however, was no sooner at the full than it ı to wane. Some critics, in the exercise of their voca- took more pleasure in exposing his faults than in praising or what was praiseworthy; in journals which at the com- ement of his career had been friendly to him, there arose writers "who knew not Hayley;" like every successful r, he had provoked some envy; and like every incautious some enemies. He incurred a certain degree of censure ıe lax tone of morals in two prose works, which, though shed anonymously, were known to be his; and in the

[8] Memoirs of Thomas Alphonso Hayley, p. 35.

same Essay wherein he apostrophized Gibbon as one on whom

> Mistaken zeal, wrapt in a priestly pall,
> Had from the baser urn pour'd darkest gall,

he offended the infidels by lamenting the historian's[9] infidelity.

> Think not my verse means blindly to engage
> In rash defence of thy profaner page!
> Though keen her spirit, her attachment fond,
> Base service cannot suit with friendship's bond.
> Too firm from duty's sacred path to turn,
> She breathes an honest sigh of deep concern,
> And pities Genius, when his wild career
> Gives Faith a wound, or Innocence a fear.

The friends of Hume took umbrage at the manner in which his history[10] was censured; and the friends of Warburton.. (for Warburton had friends, and deserved to have them,).. were not less displeased at seeing his works treated with unwarrantable contempt. Hayley thus purchased for himself unfavourable opinions from opposite quarters; and though time had taught him not to appreciate his own powers too

[9] How this should have appeared violent to Dr. Robertson is marvellous. "Who is this Mr. Hayley?" he says in a letter to Gibbon (1781). "His poetry has more merit than that of most of his contemporaries; but his Whiggism is so bigoted, and his Christianity so fierce, that he almost disgusts one with two very good things."—*Gibbon's Miscellaneous Works*, vol. ii. p. 256.

If there be any thing in the Essay on History (which is the work to which Robertson alludes) fiercer than the milky passage quoted in the text. I have not been able to discover it.

[10] .... Emerging from the sophists' school,
With spirit eager, yet with judgment cool;
With subtle skill to steal upon applause,
And give false vigour to the weaker cause;
To paint a specious scene with nicest art,
Retouch the whole, and varnish every part;
Graceful in style, in argument acute,
Master of every trick in keen dispute;
With these strong powers to form a winning tale,
And hide Deceit in Moderation's veil,
High on the pinnacle of Fashion placed,
Hume shone the idol of historic taste,
Already, pierced by Freedom's searching rays,
The waxen fabric of his fame decays!

Ep. ii. v. 548—61.

highly, it mortified[11] him to feel that he was sinking in estimation with the public. When he characterised Hume's fame as a waxen fabric, he had not questioned himself whether his own was of a more durable material. His Essays were valuable only because of the information which they contained, there was nothing in the poetry that could invite a second perusal. In the Triumphs of Temper he had addressed himself *virginibus puerisque;* to such readers it was more useful, because better adapted and more acceptable than any more serious or elevated strain; but with the general public his reputation had quietly declined. A better taste had gradually grown up. The public were no longer comprised in "the Town;" nor were the rising generation of poets contented, like their predecessors, to be known by the appellation of Wits; they had been recalled to the study of nature, and had been led to drink at the wells of English undefiled. More than any other poet, Cowper had contributed to establish this reformation, and the decline of Hayley's celebrity was an inevitable consequence. Merry's sky-rockets, and Darwin's gas-lights, would have thrown it into shade no longer than while they lasted.

But Hayley was incapable of envy, incapable of looking upon any man as his rival; in every sense of the word he was one of the most generous of men. His friendship for Cowper could not have been more sincere, if it had been of old standing and slow growth; and it had the ardour of novelty to animate it. Cowper, having been equally taken with his guest, had explained to him the state of his own circumstances; and Hayley's first thought was, that it might be practicable to procure a pension for him through Thurlow's influence. He had published an unsuccessful[12] poem on the

[11] Miss Seward, after an unexpected visit (1789) from "the illustrious, the graceful Hayley," says, "The nonsense and malice of the public critics seem to have given him the same disgust at the idea of publishing that sickness upon my spirit, and slackens all my nerves of poetic industry." —*Letters*, vol. ii. p. 272.

Speaking of Maty's Review, she says (1788), "Never shall I forget his long, elaborate, confused, and stupid critique upon Hayley's beautiful Triumphs of Temper. This same critique places its author amongst the minor poets of the present period. O the Midas! the Midas! From that moment I never looked into Maty-trash. It was no meat for me."—Ib. p. 7.

[12] The history of this composition is somewhat curious. "The poet *(Poeta loquitur)—was called to* London by a pressing solicitation from

anniversary of the Revolution, which poem he had sent to the Chancellor, and received from him a complimentary note of acknowledgment[13]. But he had a friend, Carwardine by name, whom he rarely mentions without some epithet indicative of cordial regard, who being intimate with both, had long wished to make them acquainted with each other, especially as both were admirers and friends of his own friend Romney. This object was accomplished; and Hayley became sufficiently acquainted with Thurlow, to flatter himself that he stood high in his good graces. He now hoped that this influence might be usefully exerted in Cowper's behalf.

"Can I ever honour you enough for your zeal to serve me," says Cowper on this occasion[14]. "Truly I think not. I am, however, so sensible of the love I owe you on this account, that I every day regret the acuteness of your feelings for me, convinced that they expose you to much trouble, mortification, and disappointment. I have, in short, a poor opinion of my destiny, as I told you when you were here; and though I believe that if any man living can do me good, you will, I cannot yet persuade myself that even you will be successful in attempting it. But it is no matter; you are yourself a good which I can never value enough; and whether rich or

his esteemed friend Dr. Kippis, to gratify the votaries of constitutional liberty, by a poem on the anniversary, which the admirers of King William were preparing to celebrate. The invitation was in unison with the poet's principles and feelings; but he had hardly reached his cell in Barnard's Inn, where he wished to compose the occasional poem requested, when a new affliction threw a gloom over his mind."—This was the sudden death of one of his earliest and most beloved friends. Having written an epitaph for him, "the poet endeavoured to soothe and fortify his mind under his recent affliction, by celebrating the hero William, the deliverer of England and of Europe."—*Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 367—8.

[13] "The Chancellor presents his best respects to Mr. Hayley, and returns him many thanks for his poems. They give a bright relief to the subject. William is much obliged to him, and Mary more; and if it may be said without offence, liberty itself derives advantage from this dress."

"There's flattery for you, from the great!" says Hayley. "I told the Angelic Cracherode this morning, that I called on him to give me a sermon on humility, lest my head should turn with the adulation I have received." The Poet—*(Poeta loquitur)* might have found a sufficient antidote against vanity on this occasion, in the very moderate sale of his production, which, "though well recited at a very numerous public meeting, and extolled *by many private friends*, was very far from becoming popular."—Ib. 368—9.

[14] *June 5, 1792.*

oor in other respects, I shall always account myself better rovided for than I deserve, with such a friend at my back s you. Let it please God to continue to me my William nd Mary, and I will be more reasonable than to grumble."

To Lady Hesketh he says[15] after saying that everybody must fall in love with Hayley, "the Chancellor, I am willing o hope, will not be the only insensible. But I am less sanuine in my expectations in that, and indeed in every other uarter, where my interest is concerned, than either he or ou. Depend on it, my dear, I was born to be poor; and hough Hayley would enrich me, if any mortal could, having uch zeal and such talents as usually carry all before them, my estiny, I fear, will prove too hard for him."

Perhaps Hayley himself, if he had not happily been always f a hopeful disposition, might have come to a like conclusion, hen having, upon his arrival in London, written a note to he Chancellor, requesting an appointment to breakfast, so ong a time elapsed without his receiving an answer, that it eemed as if it had either been forgotten, or which was more ikely, that there was no intention of answering it. It happened, however, that Carwardine was about to send Cowper's oems as a present to the Chancellor's daughter; he took his fair occasion for writing a second note. The appointment vas then made, and Hayley immediately communicated the esult to Weston in these words, "Huzza! I have passed an greeable hour, from eight to nine this morning, with the Chancellor, and left both him and Lord Kenyon, who was vith us, so impressed with warm wishes to serve you, that I m persuaded your old friend Thurlow will accomplish it if ossible." Thurlow, it appears, till undeceived at this interview, had supposed Cowper to be rich: some one had told him so, who knowing that lawyers in proportion as they gain reputation acquire wealth, concluded that the case must be the same with authors.

Hayley's letters, with Mrs. Unwin's gradual amendment, and the physician's confident expectation of her recovery, raised Cowper's spirits, and he began to look forward with hope to his intended journey. August had been named for it at first; but when Hayley advised July, for the sake of having longer days before them, he assented to the argument.

[15] June 6.

"This, however," said he[16], "must be left to the Giver of all good. If our visit to you be according to his will, He will smooth our way before us, and appoint the time of it; and thus I speak, not because I wish to seem a saint in your eyes, but because my poor Mary actually is one, and would not set her foot over the threshold, unless she had, or thought she had, God's free permission. With that she would go through floods and fire, though without it she would be afraid of every thing,—afraid even to visit you, dearly as she loves, and much as she longs to see you."

The intervening weeks were eventful ones in Cowper's little circle. Sir John Throckmorton having removed into Oxfordshire, upon succeeding to the baronetcy, Weston Hall became the residence of his brother George, who had now taken the name of Courtenay, and at this time brought home his bride there, the Catherine of Cowper's poems. Johnny of Norfolk came again to visit his kinsman. "How do you imagine I have been occupied these last ten days?" says Cowper to Mr. Bull[17]. "In sitting,—not on cockatrice eggs, nor yet to gratify a mere idle humour, nor because I was too sick to move; but because my cousin Johnson has an aunt who has a longing desire of my picture, and because he would therefore bring a painter from London to draw it. For this purpose I have been sitting, as I say, these ten days, and am heartily glad that my sitting time is over." To Hayley he says,

> Abbot is painting me so true,
> That (trust me) you would stare,
> And hardly know, at the first view,
> If I were here or there.

In the opinion of all who saw the portrait at that time, and in Cowper's own, the artist had succeeded to admiration. "I think," he says to Lady Hesketh[18], "it will afford you as much pleasure, nay, perhaps even more, than a sight of the original myself; for you will see it with the thought in your mind, that whether I live or die, while this picture subsists, my charming lineaments and proportions can never be forgotten. —I verily think the portrait, exclusive of the likeness, which is the closest imaginable, one of the best I ever saw."

"But the picture," said he to Mr. Bull[19], "is not the only prodigy I have to tell you of. A greater belongs to me, and

[16] June 19. [17] July 25. [18] July 21. [19] July 25.

hat you will hardly credit, even on my own testimony. :e on the eve of a journey, and a long one. On this very e'nnight, we set out for Eartham, the seat of my brother Mr. Hayley, on the other side of London, nobody knows :, a hundred and twenty miles off. Pray for us, my l, that we may have a safe going and return! It is a ndous exploit, and I feel a thousand anxieties when I of it. But a promise made to him when he was here, ve would go if we could, and a sort of persuasion that an if we will, oblige us to it." To Mr. Newton, he , "You may imagine that we, who have been resident e spot so many years, do not engage in such an enter- without some anxiety: persons accustomed to travel l make themselves merry with mine, it seems so dispro- ned to the occasion. Once I have been on the point of nining not to go, and even since we fixed the day,—my les have been so insupportable. But it has been made a r of much prayer; and at last it has pleased God to y me, in some measure, that his will corresponds with urpose, and that he will afford us his protection."

. Newton had recently made him a transient visit. "I ed," says Cowper, "and had reason to do so, in your ıg to Weston, for I think the Lord came with you. Not d to abide with me; not to restore me to that intercourse ıim which I enjoyed twenty years ago; but to awaken in ıowever, more spiritual feeling than I have experienced, t in two instances, during all that time. The comforts I had received under your ministry, in better days, all d upon my recollection; and during two or three tran- moments, seemed to be in a degree renewed. You will ıe that, transient as they were, they were yet evidence of : that is not so; and I am desirous to believe it."

ere was a time when both Cowper and Mrs. Unwin re- the most entire confidence in Mr. Newton. He had lost of his influence over them, perhaps in consequence of g improperly asserted it; certain however it is, that they ıot communicate to him a very singular proceeding in ı they were then engaged, and in which Mrs. Unwin never l have partaken, nor have permitted Cowper to engage, : intellect had not been impaired. Cowper's attack in

[20] July 30.

1787 had been more formidable than that in 1773; he had attempted suicide, and would have effected it, if Mrs. Unwin had not providentially entered the place in which he had suspended himself by the neck, and had she not also possessed presence of mind enough to cut him down. The former malady was of much longer duration, and the recovery had been slow: in the latter it was instantaneous. The same dreadful delusion concerning his present rejection and probable reprobation continued in both cases, after his restoration; and from the time of the last seizure his nervous system remained always in a state of diseased activity. Most persons know by their own experience, that in what is called "the vapours," objects pass before our closed eyes with all the vividness and distinctness of reality. The sense of hearing is subject to the same kind of illusion, (though the phenomenon is far less frequent) and articulated sounds are as actually heard in the one case, as forms and faces are seen in the other. The visual illusion Cowper would have understood, even in his disordered state of mind; but to the audible one he gave entire credit. It was more particularly upon waking in the morning, or in the night, that he expected to hear something; something was generally heard in consequence of that expectation; and whatever words came to his inward ear, he considered as oracular.

There was a poor schoolmaster at Olney, Teedon by name, who was one of Cowper and Mrs. Unwin's pensioners. They pitied his poverty, tolerated his ridiculous vanity, and forgave his intrusions. While Unwin lived, Teedon was never mentioned in their correspondence but in a manner which showed that though they entertained a compassionate regard for him, they were fully aware of his conceitedness and his folly. When Cowper, in a letter to this most familiar of his friends, hoped the Monthly Review might be favourable to his first volume, for the sake of his Olney neighbours, who took their opinions from that journal, he said[21], "not to mention others, here is your idol, Mr. Teedon, whose smile is praise." In a subsequent letter[22] he related an anecdote, which sufficiently characterises the man: "Mr. Teedon, who favours us now and then with his company in an evening, as usual, was not long since discoursing with that eloquence which

[21] *See vol. ii. p. 29.* [22] Feb. 7, 1785.

is so peculiar to himself, on the many providential interpositions that had taken place in his favour. 'He had wished for many things, (he said,) which at the time when he formed those wishes seemed distant and improbable, some of them indeed impossible. Among other wishes that he had indulged, one was, that he might be connected with men of genius and ability,—'and in my connexion with this worthy gentleman (said he, turning to me,) that wish, I am sure, is amply gratified.' You may suppose that I felt the sweat gush out upon my forehead when I heard that speech; and if you do, you will not be at all mistaken, so much was I delighted with the delicacy of that incense."

Yet clearly as Cowper then saw the ridiculous points in this man's character, he began at length to agree with him in the notion that he was especially favoured by Providence; to communicate his waking dreams to him, and to consult him as a person whom the Lord was pleased to answer in prayer. It is possible that when Mrs Unwin found this was not to be prevented, she may have fallen in with it, knowing that Teedon would, of course, endeavour always to remove his distressing impressions, and encourage him by hopeful interpretations, and thinking that one delusion might thus be counteracted by another. But as her own mind failed, she appears to have caught her poor companion's insanity upon this point; had her son been living, he would have prevented a folly, which could not have been concealed from him in his visits, even if they had not been withheld from it by their love and deference for him. As for the schoolmaster, when he perceived in what light he was considered by two persons whom he had been accustomed to look up to as greatly his superiors, neither his vanity nor his modesty would allow him to question their discernment. No suspicion of knavery attaches to him, for he was a simple-hearted creature: as they would have him to be a sort of high priest *incog.* such he fancied himself to be, and consulted his internal Urim and Thummim with happy and untroubled confidence.

The earliest notice of these pitiable consultations relates to the proposed edition of Milton. "Mrs. Unwin thanks Mr. Teedon for his letters, and is glad to find the Lord gives him so great encouragement to proceed, by shining on his addresses, and quickening him by his word. Mrs. Unwin ac-

knowledges the Lord's goodness, which is mixed with the many and various trials He sees fit to visit his servants with. There is no doubt but that there is a need-be for the manifold temptations to which they are exposed by night and by day. In his own best time he will appear for them[23]." In the week following[24], "Mrs. Unwin has the satisfaction of informing Mr. Teedon, that Mr. Cowper is tranquil this morning, and that with this which Mr. Teedon receives, a letter by the post decisive of his undertaking the important business, will go by the same messenger. May the Lord speed it! His glory, the good of many, and our comfort, form the basis of his determination. Mr. Cowper and Mrs. Unwin are agreed that it was hardly possible to find out a reference to the great point in Mr. Teedon's first letter; his second favour elucidated the whole, and removed all doubts. They hope Mr. Teedon will continue to help them with his prayers on this occasion; and wish that every blessing bestowed upon them may be doubled to him." Another note, which must have been written soon afterwards, says, "Mr. Cowper desires Mrs. Unwin to acquaint Mr. Teedon, that his anxiety did not arise from any difficulties he apprehended in the performance of his work, but his uncertainty whether he was providentially called to it or not. He is now clearly persuaded, by Mr. Teedon's experiences and gracious notices, that he is called to it, and is therefore perfectly easy. Mr. Cowper and Mrs. Unwin thank Mr. Teedon for the interesting part he takes in this affair, and hope the Lord will continue to enable him not only to persevere, but also to feel a blessing in it, to his own self, spiritually and personally. Mr. Cowper begs Mr. Teedon will be very earnest in prayer, that the possession of peace he now enjoys may be continued to him[25]."

These notes were written some three months before Mrs. Unwin had that first fit, which was followed in the course of the spring by a paralytic stroke. But her health had for some time been declining, and her mind had been impaired with it, so that she confirmed Cowper in a delusion from which her influence might otherwise have preserved him. He who had formerly regarded Teedon with as much derision as was compatible with real kindness to the poor creature him-

[23] Sept. 1, 1791. [24] Sept. 7.
[25] *Appendix to* Gauntlett's Sermons, vol. ii. pp. 387—8.

self, and with his own compassionate nature, consulted him now on his hopes and fears, his dreams, his waking impressions, and his engagement, and carefully wrote in a book the oracular responses which he received, till he had filled volumes. When he told Mr. Newton that their intended visit to Hayley had been made the subject of much prayer, and that it had pleased God to satisfy him in some measure concerning it, there can be no doubt that he alluded to the encouragement which Teedon had given him.

July had far advanced when Cowper wrote to Lady Hesketh[26], saying they had not even yet determined absolutely on their journey to Eartham,—"but shall (he added) I believe, in two or three days, decide in favour of it. Hayley interests himself so much in favour of it, and I am persuaded that it bids fair to do us both so much good, that I am sincerely desirous of going. A thousand lions, monsters, and giants are in the way, but perhaps they will all vanish, if I have but the courage to face them. Mrs. Unwin, whose weakness might justify her fears, has none. Her trust in the Providence of God makes her calm on all occasions." On that day, however, the determination was made, and Cowper announced it in the gaiety of excited spirits to his host expectant.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, July 22, 1792.

This important affair, my dear brother, is at last decided, and we are coming. Wednesday se'nnight, if nothing occur to make a later day necessary, is the day fixed for our journey. Our rate of travelling must depend on Mary's ability to bear it. Our mode of travelling will occupy three days unavoidably, for we shall come in a coach. Abbot finishes my picture tomorrow; on Wednesday he returns to town, and is commissioned to order one down for us, with four steeds to draw it;

> ———"hollow pamper'd jades of Asia,
> That cannot go but forty miles a day."

Send us our route, for I am as ignorant of it almost, as if I were in a strange country. We shall reach St. Alban's, I suppose, the first day; say where we must finish our second day's journey, and at what inn we may best repose? As to

[26] July 21.

the end of the third day, we know where that will find us, viz. in the arms and under the roof of our beloved Hayley.

General Cowper, having heard a rumour of this intended migration, desires to meet me on the road, that we may once more see each other. He lives at Ham, near Kingston. Shall we go through Kingston, or near it? For I would give him as little trouble as possible, though he offers very kindly to come as far as Barnet for that purpose. Nor must I forget Carwardine, who so kindly desired to be informed what way we should go. On what point of the road will it be easiest for him to find us? On all these points you must be my oracle. My friend and brother, we shall overwhelm you with our numbers; this is all the trouble that I have left. My Johnny of Norfolk, happy in the thought of accompanying us, would be broken-hearted to be left behind.

In the midst of all these solicitudes I laugh to think what they are made of, and what an important thing it is for me to travel. Other men steal away from their homes silently, and make no disturbance; but when I move, houses are turned upside down, maids are turned out of their beds, all the counties through which I pass appear to be in an uproar. Surrey greets me by the mouth of the General, and Essex by that of Carwardine. How strange does all this seem to a man who has seen no bustle, and made none, for twenty years together! Adieu, W. C.

A second letter informed Hayley that the purpose held good, though he had once been on the point of abandoning it.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

Weston, July 29, 1792.

Through floods and flames to your retreat
I win my desperate way,
And when we meet, if e'er we meet,
Will echo your huzza!

You will wonder at the word *desperate* in the second line, and at the *if* in the third; but could you have any conception of the fears I have had to battle with, of the dejection of spirits that I have suffered concerning this journey, you would wonder much more that I still courageously persevere in my resolution to undertake it. Fortunately for my intentions, it happens that as the day approaches my terrors abate;

for had they continued to be what they were a week since, I must, after all, have disappointed you; and was actually once on the verge of doing it. I have told you something of my nocturnal experiences, and assure you now, that they were hardly ever more terrific than on this occasion. Prayer has, however, opened my passage at last, and obtained for me a degree of confidence, that I trust will prove a comfortable viaticum to me all the way. On Wednesday, therefore, we set forth.

The terrors, that I have spoken of, would appear ridiculous to most; but to you they will not, for you are a reasonable creature, and know well, that to whatever cause it be owing, (whether to constitution, or to God's express appointment), I am hunted by spiritual hounds in the night season. I cannot help it. You will pity me, and wish it were otherwise; and though you may think there is much of the imaginary in it, will not deem it for that reason an evil less to be lamented. So much for fears and distresses. Soon I hope they shall all have a joyful termination, and I, my Mary, my Johnny, and my dog, be skipping with delight at Eartham.

Well! this picture is at last finished, and well finished, I can assure you. Every creature that has seen it has been astonished at the resemblance. Sam's boy bowed to it, and Beau walked up to it wagging his tail as he went, and evidently showing that he acknowledged its likeness to his master. It is a half-length, as it is technically, but absurdly called; that is to say, it gives all but the foot and ankle. To-morrow it goes to town, and will hang some months at Abbot's, when it will be sent to its due destination in Norfolk.

I hope, or rather wish, that at Eartham I may recover that habit of study, which, inveterate as it once seemed, I now seem to have lost,—lost to such a degree, that it is even painful to me to think of what it will cost me to acquire it again.

Adieu! my dear, dear Hayley; God give us a happy meeting! Mary sends her love. She is in pretty good plight this morning, having slept well, and for her part, has no fears at all about the journey. Ever yours, W. C.

Eartham, where Hayley then resided, is about six miles from Chichester, and five from Arundel, a little to the left of the road. His father had, in the year 1743, purchased a small estate in

the village, and the ruins of a mansion which had belonged to a certain Sir Robert Fagg, once celebrated in provincial song for having stood for the county and polled two votes. "A sequestered spot (Hayley calls it) peculiarly embellished by nature." The purchaser removed the ruins, and built a diminutive villa, on higher ground, as a kind of summer-house, to which he occasionally sent his children from Chichester, for the benefit of better air. Five years after the purchase, his remains were deposited in Eartham churchyard. This little establishment was censured as an act of extravagance in one who had considerably impaired his patrimony; to his son, however, it proved, in process of time, a singular source of health and delight. It had remained untenanted for some years, and of course had suffered considerably, before Hayley rendered it habitable for a tenant; and when he went to reside there in 1774, it was with the intention of enlarging and decorating it, and making it his chosen abode for the rest of his life. His expectations of happiness were expressed in some elegiac stanzas, addressed to his wife.

Swift come the day, when we shall well exchange
  Thy dust, O London, and thy noisy throng,
For fields where leisure may unbounded range,
  Listening to health and pleasure's sprightly song!

And thou, sweet Eartham! dear retreat, receive
  Thy fond possessor in no ill-starred hour;
Ne'er will he wish thy tranquil shades to leave,
  And fly ignobly to the shrines of power.

No: he will wish, (nor let that wish be vain!)
  To aid thy charms with independent pride;
To rear the peaceful grove where Love shall reign,
  And raise the roof where Friendship shall preside.

Perchance, long banish'd from his failing eyes,
  The heroic Muse will come with all her fire:
Yes, in thy shades her sacred form will rise,
  And strike to Liberty the lofty lyre.

Eliza, too, enamour'd of thy bower,
  Will make thee, Eartham, her peculiar care;
And court, to grace thee, every coyer flower
  That yields reluctant to the vernal air.

* * * * *

Nor this alone, but far superior care
  Eliza's gentle generous heart will know;
She to the afflicted cottage will repair,
  And sooth the villager's heart-rending woe.

Where'er she comes, with no unkind delay,
The infant tenants will with transport bound,
Her smile will chase oppressive want away,
And spread a little holiday around.

Some of these dreams were fulfilled, but neither the most ambitious, nor the most amiable of them. The heroic Muse did not visit him at Eartham; and among all his enjoyments there, that of domestic happiness was wanting. When Hayley communicated to his mother his intention of marrying one whom she had known intimately for many years, she reminded him that Eliza's mother had been in a state of mental derangement from the time of her daughter's birth, and asked him to consider what his feelings would be if he should ever see his wife in the same condition? "I have asked my own heart that question," he replied, "and I will tell you its immediate answer. In that case I should bless God for having given me courage sufficient to make myself the legal guardian of the most amiable and most pitiable woman on earth." "My dear child," she replied, "I have done. Your heart is very pure; your feelings are quick and strong; your intentions are always kind. I will not thwart your affections, but only pray to Heaven that they may be rendered the source of lasting happiness to yourself." The mother's apprehensions were more nearly verified than the son's confidence in his own sense of duty; but happily for herself, she died before the infelicities and irregularities of his domestic life began.

The morbid tendency that Mrs. Hayley had inherited, never affected her intellect: but it manifested itself in sudden fluctuations of spirits, extreme irritability, and restlessness. He calls her his "pitiable Eliza," speaks of her "marvellous mental infelicities," and says that her state of mind was to all, who tenderly regarded her, an evil more distressing than madness itself. At times, suspicion and pride were its chief characteristics, at other times depression and melancholy. He was involved, he says, in scenes of anguish and affliction, with which no human powers appeared strong enough incessantly to contend. Jealousy, however, made no part of their unhappiness; for when Hayley had granted himself a patriarch's license, she, with equal complacency absolved him from the obligation of conjugal fidelity, and having no children herself,

adopted from his birth, one whom he named Thomas Alphonso Hayley. It was not till several years after the birth of this child that they finally separated, upon amicable terms. Mrs. Hayley was settled at Derby, where she had many acquaintances; she was still proud of her husband, though love had long ceased to have any place in her breast; she kept up a frequent correspondence with him, and in her cheerful moods, generally addressed him by the name of Hotspur.

Neither party seems to have been rendered unhappy by their separation. Mrs. Hayley was remarkable for a want of feeling as peculiar as her excessive irritability; and her husband, under the severest sorrows found relief in giving them utterance, and with his happy activity of mind was never in want of some object to occupy and amuse him. Except in his dream of connubial happiness, no man was ever less disappointed in his hopes than Hayley in those expectations with which he entered upon his abode at Eartham. He had inherited from his father, he says, "a passion for the spot, a passion also for building and gardening, for pictures and for books; and a contempt for money, romantic and imprudent." Luckily he did not inherit his father's taste in building as well as his passion for it; for the elder Hayley, a little before his decease, had begun to construct an additional apartment to his house at Chichester, of so singular a form, that the least improbable guess which could be formed of his intention, conjectured it to be meant for "a diminutive representation of the mosque of St. Sophia at Constantinople!" The son began his improvements at Eartham "with more attention to economy and mere convenience than he usually exerted, adding only such offices and chambers as were absolutely requisite for his family." But as he went on embellishing his garden and enlarging his house, "he was willing to believe that the success of his writings would ultimately repay him for whatever he expended in decorating a favourite scene of study and retirement." This he confesses sometimes appeared to him like running a race in a sack: though his friends might have observed that, on the contrary, he could not have devised a surer means of outrunning the constable. But on that score he never suffered any serious uneasiness; his habits were inexpensive, his patrimony had been well husbanded by a *careful mother* during his long minority; and when at length

he might otherwise have been straightened in his circumstances, his connexion with Cowper became the means of placing him at ease, in a remarkable manner, for the last twenty years of his life.

He made this residence a delightful spot. Gibbon called it the little Paradise of Eartham. "His place (said the historian) though small, is as elegant as his mind, which I value much more highly;" and communicating to Lord Sheffield a wish which Hayley had expressed to become acquainted with him; he adds, that this was "no vulgar compliment." Hayley is now estimated only by his writings, and these, because they were greatly overrated in their day, have perhaps, been depreciated since in proportion. But the person of whom Gibbon could speak thus, must have been no ordinary man. Literary acquirements like his were rare at that time, and are not common now; and these were not his only accomplishments. All who knew him, concur in describing his manners as in the highest degree winning, and his conversation as delightful. It is said that few men have ever rendered so many essential acts of kindness to those who stood in need of them. His errors were neither few nor trifling; but his good qualities greatly preponderated. He was a most affectionate father, a most warm and constant friend; and his latter days of infirmity and pain were distinguished by no common degree of cheerful fortitude and Christian resignation.

Eartham had received many distinguished guests, whose names will not be forgotten in the history of English literature and English art. Howard, who belongs to a different class of worthies, visited his encomiast there. Gibbon has already been mentioned. Romney and Flaxman were frequent visitors, being, indeed, two of Hayley's most intimate friends. Joseph Warton. Sargent, the author of the Mine, a good and amiable man, not to be mentioned without respect. Nor will I add Miss Seward's name to the list without rendering justice to one who has been greatly disparaged, chiefly because of her affected style. She was a woman whose talents, if her language had not been distorted by false notions of excellence in composition, might have retained for her the high station among female writers, which in her palmy days it was allowed that she had won. Though not always a judicious critic, she was never unjust or ungenerous in her censures; and if she

frequently mistook glittering faults for beauties, no beauty ever escaped her observation. I have never known any person to whose frankness and perfect candour I could with more confidence bear testimony. It was not in mere vanity that she received all the incense which was profusely offered her, but because she believed others to be as sincere as herself.

Hayley was now expecting a guest, very unlike any of those whose occasional visits had rendered Eartham a distinguished spot, giving it a celebrity which it will not lose. Since he passed through London, on his return from Weston, Thurlow had ceased to be Chancellor. This unexpected event abated the hope which he had reasonably entertained of serving Cowper through that channel; but with that buoyant and happy disposition which makes the best of every thing, he thought it would gratify Cowper in another way, if, now that Thurlow was master of his own time, he could bring about a meeting between them. Accordingly he wrote to the Ex-Chancellor, what Miss Seward would have called, this truly Hayleyan epistle[27].

MY DEAR LORD, Eartham, near Chichester, July 1, 1792.

May I, without impertinence, speak to you again on paper, after having so recently trespassed on your time in person, and talked, I fear, with more zeal than discretion?

Yes, now your hand, with decent pride,
  Relinquishes that seal unstain'd
Which Bacon, Law's less upright guide!
  With many a sordid spot profaned;

Haply from cumbrous pomp released
  You now, escaping thorny strife,
Have time to grace a Hermit's feast,
  And honour sweet sequester'd life.

Here nature reigns o'er souls elate,
  Her tranquil smiles this scene endear:
And Fancy, Freedom, Friendship wait,
  To hail their favourite Cowper here.

To dignify this dear retreat,
  Would I could tempt you to descend,
And in our first of Poets meet,
  Life's richest gift, an ancient friend!

[27] I am obliged to Mr. Carwardine, the son of Hayley's friend, for this curious letter.

Our dear William of Weston, my lord, has kindly promised to accelerate his intended visit to the south, and to be with me in July: if, in your summer excursion, you are led towards the south coast, how happy should I be to present to you, under my roof, the man you honoured with your early regard, and to hear him say to you, as his brother Horace said to a patron of a weaker spirit,

Primâ dicte mihi, summâ dicende Camenâ!

At all events it is the delight and pride of my heart to have thoroughly revealed to your lordship, *all the iniquity of fortune* towards an author, whose merits and whose misfortunes are so various and so extraordinary. If you can find or create an opportunity of redressing that iniquity, I am persuaded that your lordship will regard it as one of the most happy,—and assuredly men of letters will esteem it as one of the most honourable incidents in a long life of honour.

When talents and virtues a mortal endear,
  Yet fail to preserve him from Fortune's control,
Who binds her weak captive in Want's narrow sphere,
  With Adversity's irons that enter the soul;

Say is it not, Thurlow! an office divine,
  With the firm hand of friendship to cancel such wrongs?
May the verses of Cowper proclaim it is thine,
  While genius and gratitude hallow his songs!

If I pester you, my lord, with prose and rhyme, it may yet comfort you to reflect, that you are in no danger of receiving, either from your old friend or from me, any *doses of adulation*. I have even had the assurance to show you, more than once, that my opinions, on some points, are directly opposite to yours. I believe you are one of the few great men in the world, whom a little man may venture to contradict, without the hazard of making an enemy. No trifling eulogy, my lord! and I am greatly deceived, indeed, if it is not true.

The more just it is, the more pleasure it would give me to receive you in this poetical hermitage, a little temple consecrated to Liberty and Friendship, where difference of opinion produces no hatred, and similarity of pursuit no jealousy.

A famous monarch used, you know, to say that in serving an individual, he generally made one man ungrateful, and many discontented. What a rare blessing then, my lord, may be yours, since in *serving one* poet, you may render two very

thankful and happy! Believe me, it is with the utmost truth I assure you, that in securing a decent and comfortable independence for our beloved Cowper, you will confer the highest pleasure and obligation upon

Your lordship's sincere and respectful,
though importunate servant, W. HAYLEY.

It could have been no disappointment to Cowper that Hayley did not succeed in bringing about a meeting which would have been far more painful than pleasurable to both parties. Thurlow was no longer the Thurlow who had been his daily companion and bosom friend during some of the blithest years of life: and Cowper no longer the Cowper with whom his fellow clerk used to pass those hours in mirthful or in thoughtful conversation which ought to have been employed in engrossing; and to "giggle and make giggle" at Ashley Cowper's always hospitable house. The one had felt Adversity's "iron scourge," and the World had set its iron stamp on the other's stronger and coarser mould. Each too had something to forgive in himself, the consciousness whereof could not but have produced an uneasy feeling: Thurlow, that he had failed at one time in that courtesy to an old and unfortunate friend, which in his case would have been kindness; and Cowper, that he had given vent to his resentment in bitter strains, which, though unpublished, had not been kept secret from some of his correspondents. Indeed, except in Lady Hesketh's case, Cowper seems rather to have shunned than desired a meeting with any of those persons who had been his first and most intimate associates, and to whom in some woeful respects he must have appeared "so fallen, so changed!" Formidable as the journey from the northern extremity of Buckinghamshire to the shores of Sussex appeared to him, he dreaded nothing so much as an interview with General Cowper on the way,.. which yet, having been desired by the General, he could not decline. He had not seen him for thirty years, "and but for this journey," he says, "should never have seen him again." It was not that his love for those friends was diminished, but because he could not bear to have one part of his life brought too strongly to his recollection.

Rose walked from London to meet the travellers at Barnet, *where they* slept the first night. At Kingston, where they *dined the* next day, they found the General; and late on the

third evening, "after three days confinement in a coach, and suffering as they went," he says, "all that could be suffered from excessive heat and dust, they arrived at Hayley's door." The first letter which he wrote after his arrival appears to have been—to Mr. Samuel Teedon of Olney!

DEAR SIR, Eartham, near Chichester, Aug. 5, 1792.

This journey, of which we all had some fears, and I a thousand, has by the mercy of God been happily and well performed, and we have met with no terrors by the way. I indeed myself was a little daunted by the tremendous height of the Sussex hills, in comparison of which all that I had seen elsewhere are dwarfs: but I only was alarmed; Mrs. Unwin had no such sensations, but was always cheerful from the beginning of our expedition to the end of it. At Barnet we found the inn so noisy that I was almost driven to despair by the dread that she would get no rest; but I was happily disappointed. She slept about four hours, and seemed as much refreshed as if she had slept twice as many. At Ripley, we had a silent inn, and rested well. The next day, but late, we arrived at Eartham; and now begin to feel ourselves, under the hospitable roof of our amiable friend, well requited for all the fatigue, the heat, and the clouds of dust that we endured in the journey.

I had one glimpse—at least I was willing to hope it was a glimpse—of heavenly light by the way; an answer I suppose to many fervent prayers of yours. Continue to pray for us, and when any thing occurs worth communicating let us know it.

Mrs. Unwin is in charming spirits, to which the incomparable air and delightful scenes of Eartham have much contributed. But our thanks are always due to the Giver of all good for these and all his benefits; for without His blessing Paradise itself would not cheer the soul that knows him.

Adieu. I am yours with many thanks for all your spiritual aids. WM. COWPER.

Mrs. Unwin sends her kind remembrances.

"Here we are," says Cowper[28], "in the most elegant mansion that I have ever inhabited, and surrounded by the most delightful pleasure grounds that I have ever seen; but

[28] To Mr. Greathead, Aug. 6.

which, dissipated as my powers of thought are at present, I will not undertake to describe. It shall suffice me to say, that they occupy three sides of a hill, which in Buckinghamshire might well pass for a mountain, and from the summit of which is beheld a most magnificent landscape, bounded by the sea, and on one part by the Isle of Wight, which may also be seen plainly from the window of the library in which I am writing." —"The inland scene is equally beautiful, consisting of a large and deep valley well cultivated and enclosed by magnificent hills, all crowned with wood. I had for my part no conception that a poet could be the owner of such a Paradise[29]."—"Here we are, as happy as it is in the power of terrestrial good to make us,—and our reception has been the kindest that it was possible for friendship and hospitality to contrive[30]."

Hayley was not the only person who welcomed them to Sussex as his friends;—there was another face that brightened with joy at their arrival. The reader will remember that when he enquired for an electrical machine in the hope of its producing a beneficial effect upon Mrs. Unwin immediately after her paralytic stroke, one had to his great surprise been found in the village. The owner, Mr. Sockett, who had partly constructed it himself, and whom Cowper described as a very worthy, intelligent, but unfortunate man, of the gentlest manners, was then absent on a distant journey of unsuccessful business; his son, a youth of about fifteen, brought the machine to Weston Lodge, and came every day to assist in using it. Hayley was interested by all he saw and all that he heard of his young assistant, the more perhaps because Thomas Sockett had, like himself, been afflicted with much illness in his childhood; and when the youth, who wrote an excellent hand, and was a good arithmetician, wishing to be no longer a burthen to his parents, asked if he could recommend him to any situation as a clerk in London, it occurred to him that young Sockett might be very useful in teaching his own son what he was capable of teaching well, and might acquire more Latin and some Greek from his disciple: he had just before bought a Latin grammar with the little pocket money that he had saved for that purpose. Cowper, agreeing as he did with his new friend upon the advantages of private

[29] *To Mrs.* Courtenay, Aug. 12. [30] To Mr. Greathead.

education, thought the plan likely to be advantageous for both boys, and Hayley when he departed from Weston took Sockett with him. Thomas Hayley was well pleased with a companion who, acting towards him in the double capacity of preceptor and pupil, was only three years his senior; they became good friends, and when Cowper arrived at Eartham he and Mrs. Unwin were delighted to find that the plan was succeeding to the satisfaction of all parties. The two boys endeared themselves to him by their attention to Mrs. Unwin; and she called them her pair of young griffins, because they used every day to draw her round the hill in a four-wheeled garden chair.

Change of air and of circumstances seemed to benefit both the travellers. "I indeed," says Cowper[31], "was in tolerable health before I set out, but have acquired since I came both a better appetite and a knack of sleeping almost as much in a single night as formerly in two. Whether double quantities of that article will be favourable to me as a poet, time must show. About myself, however, I care little, being made of materials so tough as not to threaten me even now, at the end of so many *lustrums*, with any thing like a speedy dissolution. My chief concern has been about Mrs. Unwin; and my chief comfort at this moment is that she likewise has received, I hope, considerable benefit by the journey." He complained, however, that being in a new scene, and surrounded by strange objects, he found his powers of thinking dissipated to a degree that rendered it difficult for him even to write a letter, and made him as awkward at verse as if he had never dealt in it. "I am in truth," said he[32], "so unaccountably local in the use of my pen, that, like the man in the fable who could leap well no where but at Rhodes, I seem incapable of writing at all except at Weston."

Yet his time at Eartham was far from being idly spent. Hayley imparted to him his life of Milton, as far as he had then proceeded with it; and Cowper, who had completed his translations of Milton's Latin and Italian poems, revised them carefully with Hayley[33], comparing the version with the original.

[31] To Mrs. Courtenay, Aug. 25. [32] To Lady Hesketh, Sept. 9.

[33] "Let me," says Hayley, "here remark to the honour of Cowper, that with all his poetic powers, he was ever willing to receive and to avail himself of friendly criticism, with a spirit equally modest and grateful."—*Cowper's Milton*, vol. iv. *Appendix*, p. 385.

They made also a rapid yet metrical translation of Andreini's Adamo, an Italian drama, which Hayley supposed to have had some influence in directing Milton's attention to the great subject of Paradise Lost. Hayley says that this afforded them a pleasant relaxation after their more serious morning studies, and that Johnny of Norfolk "acted as secretary, and committed the composition to paper as it proceeded from the lips of the two social translators."

Among the persons whom Hayley invited to meet his honoured guest were Romney and Charlotte Smith. The latter "exerted her talents," says Hayley, "most agreeably to excite his wonder and conciliate his esteem; for happening to have begun one of her novels, the Old Manor House, she devoted the early part of the day to composition in her own apartment; and entertained the little party at Eartham by reading to them in the evening whatever the fertility of her fancy had produced in the course of a long studious morning. This lady had a quickness of invention and a rapidity of hand which astonished every witness of her abilities. Cowper repeatedly declared that he knew no man among his early associates, some of whom piqued themselves on rapid composition, who could have composed so rapidly and so well." The Old Manor House is the best of her novels; and Hayley says "it was delightful to hear her read what she had just written; for she read as she wrote, with simplicity and grace[34]."

Romney, who had long been one of Hayley's most intimate friends, was then at the height of his reputation, and, though in the decline of life, in full possession of those powers which many years before had made him an object of jealousy to Sir Joshua himself. In those days Thurlow had said, "there are two factions in art, and I am of the Romney faction[35]." Time has reversed the chancellor's decision, and yet Romney re-

[34] Life of Romney, p. 180.

[35] "This careless expression was bandied about to the sore annoyance of Reynolds. Nay, so precarious is fame, that for several years Romney had manifestly the ascendency in the scale of popular opinion; and the President had to soothe himself with the belief that the day would come when men's eyes would be opened, and the grave and quiet grandeur of his works would triumph. In those times of bitterness and feud when Sir Joshua in the course of conversation was compelled to speak of his rival, he merely indicated him by saying, 'The man in Cavendish Square.'"—*Allan Cunningham's Lives of the Painters*, vol. v. p. 96.

mains a great name and will continue so. Fuseli indeed said of him, that he was made for the times, and the times for him;—but Romney's sketches in the Fitzwilliam Museum are worth more than all Fuseli's finished works. "According to the maxim," says Flaxman, "that every painter paints himself, each picture presents in some measure a transcript of its author's merits and defects." According to that inference there is no painter of whom a more unfavourable opinion would be formed from his works than Fuseli. If he looked at other things as he looked at the human form, he could have seen nothing but what was distorted by his manner of beholding it.

That maxim Flaxman thus applies to Romney, whom he knew and loved. "The judicious eye will easily discern whether the work was produced with sensibility or want of feeling; the choice and treatment of the subject will discover whether his mind was elevated or low, as the detail of parts will explain in what branches of knowledge he was skilled or deficient, to what extent he had chosen and analysed the beauties of nature, and finally whether the work was accomplished by painful patient labour, or flowed with ease and rapidity which increased the delight and exultation of the progress. These characteristics may be as easily traced in the works of Romney as in those of any artist that ever existed. Modest in his opinion of his own talents, he practised no tricks or deception to obtain popularity; but as he loved his art fervently, he practised it honestly with indefatigable study and application. When he first began to paint, he had seen no gallery of pictures, nor the fine productions of ancient sculptors; but men, women, and children were his statues, and all objects under the cope of heaven formed his school of painting. The rainbow, the purple distance, or the silver lake, taught him colouring; the various actions and passions of the human figure, with the forms of clouds, woods, mountains, or valleys, afforded him studies of composition. Indeed his genius bore a strong resemblance to the scenes he was born in; like them it partook of the grand and beautiful; and like them also the bright sunshine and enchanting prospects of his fancy were occasionally overspread with mist and gloom."

Sir Joshua died a few months before Romney and Cowper met at Eartham. He is said to have declared it to be impossible for two painters in the same department of the art to con-

tinue in friendship with each other; and it is supposed to have been owing to him[36] that Romney was never elected even an associate of the Royal Academy. But if Romney was ever conscious of regarding him as a rival, that feeling assuredly never amounted to ill will, nor tempted him to injustice. On the contrary, he bore a fair and manly testimony to Sir Joshua's genius. Upon Hayley's telling him that a whole length of Mrs. Siddons which he had begun was thought superior to Sir Joshua's well known portrait of her as the Tragic Muse, he replied, "The people know nothing of the matter, for it is not." And when some of his friends were delivering their opinions upon the Infant Hercules,—"Gentlemen," said he, "I have listened to all you have said; some observations are true, and some are nonsense;—but no other man in Europe could paint such a picture." Romney indeed was as generous in rendering justice to his contemporaries as he was in giving to young artists such encouragement as he had stood in need of himself when he commenced his career under difficulties which few men would have braved, and fewer still could have overcome.

His countenance was intellectual, with strong marks of feeling, and a cast of melancholy. His eyes were large, quick, and significant. At the sight of distress or at a pathetic tale his lip would quiver. He was indeed sensitive to excess. When in company with his intimate friends he spoke concerning his art, Cumberland says it was with a sublimity of idea, and a peculiarity of expressive language that was entirely his own. On that subject he frequently moved himself to tears,—to which he is said to have been constitutionally prone. He had indeed a high sense of the dignity of his art. A lady once observed at Eartham, that though emulation often produced evil among artists, it appeared necessary for calling forth their talents; and if it were not for that spirit, there seemed nothing left to animate the genius of a painter. "Yes, madam, there is," said Romney, "and a more powerful incentive to laudable exertion." He waited for the question,

[36] "Reynolds, it would seem, disliked both the man and his works; and such was the omnipotence of the President, that on whomsoever his evil eye lighted, that person had small chance for the honours of the Academy;—it is well known that the President, and all who loved to be with *him, had no good* will to Romney."—*Allan Cunningham*, vol. v. p. 77.

"Pray, sir, what is it?" and replied, "Religion." Hayley affirms that he often painted under the influence of that feeling,.. "that he frequently considered the act of painting as an act of devotion, in which he was expressing his gratitude to Heaven for such talents as were given him, by his solicitude to exert them in a manner that might conduce to the great interests of mankind."

Their host at Eartham was not disappointed in his expectations, that, with so many points of approximation between them, Cowper and Romney would take to each other. But there was also a latent cause which increased the painter's sympathy towards the poet. Romney was not unacquainted with Cowper's state of mind; it had been made known to him, no doubt, as far as Hayley himself knew it at that time; perhaps he had that sad presentiment which we know by Swift's instance is sometimes felt, that he himself might one day be visited by a similar affliction; and he too had a worm at the core.

Thirty years before, Romney had left a wife and two children at Kendal, to seek his fortune in London. Born in humble life, and bred to his father's trade of carpenter, joiner and cabinet maker, he had apprenticed himself at the age of nineteen to a portrait painter in Kendal, at twenty-two had married a young woman in his own rank of life, of respectable connexions, and carefully brought up; and at twenty-seven he took leave of her with her own concurrence for this adventure,.. but with no apprehension on her part that he went with no intention of returning, and it may be hoped with no such intention on his. This indeed might be believed, if Hayley, who had particular reasons for being what in the days of the Commonwealth was called a Miltonist, had not, as far as his authority avails, fixed upon his friend the stain of having chosen thus to divorce himself, and deliberately sacrificed his duty to his ambition. Let us hope that the "frailties" which have thus been "drawn from their dread abode," were repented by the one party as sincerely as we know they were forgiven by the other!

By his industry, and his wife's excellent economy, he had accumulated one hundred pounds, seventy of which he left with her, and with the rest set out for the metropolis. As a temporary provision for one of her station, and at that time, this was not inconsiderable; nor did he ever fail to provide for her and her children. But from the hour of his departure

till his meeting with Cowper, he had never beheld the wife of his youth; nor did he behold her till seven years more had elapsed, when.. after seven and thirty years of desertion.. he returned to Kendal an old man, famous indeed and rich, but broken in health and spirits, and perhaps at heart, to be nursed[37] by her during eighteen months of bodily decay, and two years more of mental imbecility[38]. Alas, how little reliance can be placed upon kind hearts, quick sensibilities, and even devotional feelings, if there is no religious principle to control, and direct, and strengthen them!

Hayley says that the genius, the benevolence, and the misfortunes of Cowper, gave such a peculiar sweetness and sanctity to his character, as rendered his society in the highest degree delightful both to Romney and himself. It could not indeed be otherwise to men who were so well qualified to appreciate it; but Romney, who was then on the threshold of old age, had in the secret grief which he could not but feel whenever he remembered the past, or looked on to the future, a sense of silent sympathy with one whom he knew to be stricken at heart. He was "eager," says their host[39], "to execute a portrait of a person so memorable; and in drawing it he was peculiarly desirous of making the nearest approach to life that he possibly could. For this purpose he chose to make use of coloured crayons, a mode of painting in which he had indeed little experience; but he possessed that happy versatility of talent, which gave him an appearance of having been long familiar with any process of art that he had an inclination to try. He worked with uncommon diligence, zeal, and success, producing a resemblance so powerful, that spectators, who contemplated the portrait with the original by its side, thought

[37] "He had the comfort," says Hayley, "of finding an attentive affectionate nurse in a most exemplary wife, who had never been irritated to an act of unkindness, or an expression of reproach, by his years of absence and neglect." [38] "In the last letter which Hayley received from him, he said that the post had just brought him good tidings of his brother, Colonel Romney, who he hoped was then on his way home from the East Indies. The colonel arrived, hastened to Kendal just in time—not indeed to witness his death, but to see the last spark of intellect extinguished. 'Brother,' he said, 'do you not know me?' Romney looked eagerly in his face, burst into an agony of tears, half articulated some words of recognition, and then forgetting him and every one else that loved him, sunk into a state of helpless imbecility."—*Allan Cunningham, p. 132.* [39] Life of Romney, p. 177.

it hardly possible for any similitude to be more striking, or more exact."

Cowper confirms Hayley's assertion, that in the opinion of all at Eartham, Romney had drawn this likeness "with his best hand," and that it was "the most exact resemblance possible." Thus his portrait, for which he had never sate before, was taken twice in the course of two months; and in both cases it appears to his own entire satisfaction, and to that of the artist, and of the beholders. There is a great and reasonable pleasure in beholding the well authenticated likeness of one who by his actions or his writings has rendered himself a worthy object of our admiration, and the pleasure is enhanced if that sentiment be combined with a sense of gratitude and of love. It is therefore curiously fortunate that we should possess two portraits of Cowper at the same age, both so certainly and strongly resembling him, and yet so different from each other, that to acquire a good knowledge of his countenance it is necessary to see them both.

Fuseli, who disparaged every thing which he did not like, and whose speech generally savoured of verjuice and wormwood, used to call Romney a coat and waistcoat painter. But in this case Abbot's was more the matter of fact picture; it has not only the coat and waistcoat displayed, but also that other article of male dress from which one translation of the Bible has received the unbecoming name whereby it is commonly known. It represents moreover his periwig,.. probably the identical one concerning which he wrote, two years before, to Mrs. Frog[40], saying, "My periwig is arrived, and is the very perfection of all periwigs, having only one fault; which is, that my head will only go into the first half of it, the other half, or the upper part of it, continuing still unoccupied. My artist in this way at Olney has, however, undertaken to make the whole of it tenantable, and then I shall be twenty years younger than you have ever seen me." Ought not the writer then to have his portrait taken in the periwig which he had thus described? And if this were not the very periwig (which yet it probably was) it was at least one of the same kind, for the fashion of such things did not change greatly in the course of two years; nor if it had, was Cowper either at an age, or in a way of life, to alter his costume with it. Here therefore we have

[40] *March 21, 1790.*

Cowper in the complete dress of that day. He is represented, pen in hand, with a large book lying open before him, on his desk,.. that desk, Theodora's gift, which he so pleasantly described on its arrival at Olney, and which, by that description, has been rendered of all desks the most memorable. It is a front face, and the painter has not aimed at any thing more than an expression of placid thoughtfulness. The countenance is mild, pleasing, and intelligent; it would not be pronounced melancholy if it were not known to be Cowper's, and certainly there is no trace in it of any darker state of mind.

Romney's is a more ambitious portrait. "He wished," says Hayley, "to express what he often saw in studying the features of Cowper,—

The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling;

and I think he expressed it without overstepping the modesty of truth and nature; but some persons, and ladies in particular, more conversant with the colloquial than with the poetic countenance of Cowper, have supposed Romney's portrait of him to border on extravagance of expression. Painters are said to infuse into all their portraits some portion of themselves; and it is possible that Romney may have superadded a little of his own wildness and fire to the native enthusiasm of the poet whom he so zealously portrayed." "Yet," Hayley adds, "after scrutinizing it for many years, with eyes as impartial as friendship may pretend to: I regard the portrait in question as one of the most masterly and most faithful resemblances that I ever beheld. Indeed it was painted literally *con amore* (to use the technical expression applied to the happiest works of art) for Romney had conceived a most sincere affection for his new acquaintance[41]."

The painter himself, we are told, considered this portrait "as the nearest approach that he had ever made to a perfect representation of life and character[42]." Cowper expressed his opinion of it in a complimentary sonnet[43] to the painter.

[41] Life of Romney, p. 178. [42] Ibid. p. 181.

[43] Cowper says, "I intended nothing less than a sonnet when I began. I know not why, but I said to myself, it shall not be a sonnet. Accordingly I attempted it in one sort of measure, then in a second, then in a third, till I had made the trial in half a dozen different kinds of shorter verse, and behold it is a sonnet at last! The fates would have it so."—To Hayley, Oct. 28, 1792.

Romney! expert infallibly to trace
On chart or canvass, not the form alone
And semblance, but, however faintly shown,
The mind's impression too on every face,
With strokes, that time ought never to erase:
Thou hast so pencil'd mine, that though I own
The subject worthless, I have never known
The artist shining with superior grace.
But this I mark, that symptoms none of woe
In thy incomparable work appear:
Well! I am satisfied, it should be so,
Since on maturer thought, the cause is clear;
For in my looks what sorrow couldst thou see,
When I was Hayley's guest, and sat to thee?

It was likely enough that Cowper would perceive no vestige of melancholy in this portrait, the expression being nothing more than what he was accustomed to see every morning when he looked in the glass; but it seems strange that Hayley and Romney could mistake for the light of genius what Mr. Leigh Hunt has truly and forcibly described as "a fire fiercer than that either of intellect or fancy, gleaming from the raised and protruded eye." It was no ideal frenzy which had given it a character so decided, and so strongly marked, that perhaps there is no other portrait, taken from a living subject, which it is so painful to contemplate. And yet this renders it the more valuable, because it is a sure test of its truth.

At Eartham, Cowper met also his disciple Hurdis, like Romney, for the first and only time. He had recently lost a favourite sister; and Cowper was requested by Hayley to send him as pressing an invitation as he could frame. "I have every motive," said he[44], "to wish your consent. Both your benefit and my own, which I believe would be abundantly answered by your coming, ought to make me eloquent in such a cause. Here you would find silence and retirement in perfection, when you would seek them; and here such company as I have no doubt would suit you; all cheerful, but not noisy; and all alike disposed to love you. You and I seem to have a fair opportunity of meeting: it were a pity we should be in the same county, and not come together. I am here till the seventeenth of September, an interval that will afford you time to make the necessary arrangements, and to gratify me at last with an interview which I have long desired. Let me hear from you

[44] Aug. 26.

soon, that I may have double pleasure,—the pleasure of expecting, as well as that of seeing you."

Hurdis accordingly came. "You would admire him much," said Cowper to Lady Hesketh[45]. "He is gentle in his manners, and delicate in his person, resembling our poor friend Unwin, both in face and figure, more than any one I have seen. But he has not,—at least he has not at present,—his vivacity."

Six weeks, to which his visit at Eartham extended, Cowper thought "a holiday time long enough for a man who had much to do,".. though what he had to do with Milton might have been done with more advantage in Hayley's library than in his own. But the beneficial effects of change were beginning to fail. "I am, without the least dissimulation," he says to Lady Hesketh, "in good health; my spirits are about as good as you have ever seen them; and if increase of appetite, and a double portion of sleep, be advantageous, such are the advantages that I have received from this migration. As to that gloominess of mind which I have had these twenty years, it cleaves to me even here; and could I be translated to Paradise, unless I left my body behind me, would cleave to me even there also. It is my companion for life, and nothing will ever divorce us. So much for myself. Mrs. Unwin is evidently better for her jaunt, though by no means as she was before this last attack; still wanting help when she would rise from her seat, and a support in walking; but she is able to use more exercise than she could at home, and moves with rather a less tottering step. God knows what he designs for me; but when I see those who are dearer to me than myself, distempered and enfeebled, and myself as strong as in the days of my youth, I tremble for the solitude in which a few years will place me. I wish her and you to die before me, but not till I am more likely to follow immediately."

Laudanum, he tells her, was required for the "little nervous fever, to which he was always subject," and for which he found it the best remedy. The scenery itself began to oppress him; "more beautiful," said he[46], "I have never beheld, nor expect to behold; but the charms of it, uncommon as they are, have not in the least alienated my affections from Weston. The genius of that place suits me better, it has an air of snug concealment,

[45] *Sept.* 9. [46] To Lady Hesketh, Sept. 9.

in which a disposition like mine finds peculiarly gratified, whereas here, I see from every window woods like forests, and hills like mountains,—a wilderness, in short, that rather increases my natural melancholy, and which, were it not for the agreeables I find within, would seem convince me that mere change of place can avail me little. Accordingly, I have not looked out for a house in Sussex, nor shall."

In a letter of the preceding year, to Mr. Newton[47], he had said, "I would that I could see some of the mountains that you have seen; especially, because Dr. Johnson has pronounced that no man is qualified to be a poet who has never seen a mountain. But mountains I shall never see, unless perhaps in a dream, or unless there are such in Heaven.—Nor those, unless I receive twice as much mercy as ever yet was shown to any man." When Cowper and Mrs. Unwin were about to remove from Huntingdon, and the land "was all before them where to choose," Helmsley, in the North Riding of Yorkshire was one of the places where they thought of setting up their rest. If that place had been fixed on, Cowper would have been near the finest ruins in England, and within easy reach of the grandest descent from the highlands to a plain country. But, however, the course of his life might have been affected in other points, if he had settled there instead of at Olney, he could not have been better placed than where he was for the developement of his peculiar genius. "Cowper," says Sir James Mackintosh, "does not describe the most beautiful scenes in nature, he discovers what is most beautiful in ordinary scenes. In fact, Cowper saw very few beautiful scenes; but his poetical eye, and his moral heart, detected beauty in the sandy flats of Buckinghamshire[48]." The Task could not have been a more delightful poem than it is, and no other scenery could have suited its character so well, as none could have been more entirely in accord with the disposition of the poet. He missed at Eartham the repose, the shelter, and the seclusion which he felt at Weston.

As the time for their departure drew nigh, his fears on Mrs. Unwin's account began again to trouble him; "but they are not now," said he[49], "quite so reasonable as in the first instance. If she could bear the fatigue of travelling then, she is more equal

[47] Nov. 16, 1791. [48] Life of Sir James Mackintosh, vol. ii. p. 104.
[49] To *Mrs. Courtenay, Sept. 10.*

to it at present: and supposing that nothing happens to alarm her, which is very probable, may be expected to reach Weston in much better condition than when she left it. Her improvement, however, is chiefly in her looks, and in the articles of speaking and walking; for she can neither rise from her chair without help.. nor walk without a support; nor read, nor use her needles." She was indeed still so feeble as to keep him in a state of continual apprehension. "I live," said he[50], "under the point of a sword suspended by a hair."

There were other things which disturbed him when he thought of his approaching journey. It had been arranged that he should dine with General Cowper on the way. "The pleasure I shall have in the interview," said he[51], will hardly be greater than the pain I shall feel at the end of it; for we shall part, probably, to meet no more." He had also engaged to pass through London, and breakfast with Rose at his house in Chancery Lane. That he, who had never been in London, since he was taken from thence to St. Alban's, should have chosen now to pass through it, at the risk of freshening the most painful recollections of his life, seems most remarkable.

Hayley himself perceived that his friend began to feel the "attraction of home," and that Mrs. Unwin's infirm state and the declining season of the year rendered it highly necessary for them to reach their own fireside by the time they had proposed. "Their departure," he says, "was a scene of affectionate anxiety, and a perfect contrast to the gayety of their arrival at Eartham." Cowper wrote a few lines to him the same day, from Kingston; "I left you," said he, "with a heavy heart, and with a heavy heart took leave of our dear Tom at the bottom of the chalk-hill. But soon after this last separation, my troubles gushed from my eyes, and then I was better.—We must now prepare for our visit to the General. I add no more, therefore, than our dearest remembrance and prayers that God may bless you and yours, and reward you a hundred-fold for all your kindness. Tell Tom I shall always hold him dear for his affectionate attentions to Mrs. Unwin. From her heart the memory of him can never be erased."

What he felt upon this visit to the General he described thus to Hayley. "I am inclined to think you will agree with me, *that there is* sometimes more true heroism passing in a corner,

[50] *To Charlotte* Smith, Sept. [51] To Lady Hesketh, Sept. 9.

and on occasions that make no noise in the world, than has often been exercised by those, whom that world esteems her greatest heroes, and on occasions the most illustrious: I hope so at least; for all the heroism I have to boast, and all the opportunities I have of displaying any, are of a private nature. After writing the note, I immediately began to prepare for my appointed visit to Ham; but the struggles that I had with my own spirit, labouring as I did under the most dreadful dejection, are never to be told. I would have given the world to have been excused. I went, however, and carried my point against myself with a heart riven asunder—I have reasons for all this anxiety, which I cannot relate now. The visit, however, passed off well, and we returned in the dark to Kingston; I with a lighter heart than I had known since my departure from Eartham, and Mary too, for she had suffered hardly less than myself, and chiefly on my account. That night we rested well at our inn, and at twenty minutes after eight next morning set off for London; exactly at ten we reached Mr. Rose's door."

Mr. Rose was acquainted with the Welsh bard, Edward Williams, who at that time worked at his trade, as a mason, in London. He had told Cowper of his singular character, his talent for verse, and his extraordinary knowledge of Welsh antiquities and bardic traditions. Cowper had been much interested by the account, and Williams, therefore, was invited to meet him at breakfast. But Cowper's spirits, as might have been expected, failed when he felt himself in London; he sate at the corner of the fire-place in total silence, and manifested no other interest in the conversation than occasionally raising his eyes toward the speaker. Williams was struck by the quiet melancholy of his aspect; he himself, however, was led to converse upon Welsh literature and the bardic institutions, a subject with which no man was better acquainted, and few so well: and he was told afterwards that Cowper had been a pleased and attentive listener, though in too nervous a state to bear an introduction, or to converse[52].

[52] This is stated in some Recollections of the Welsh Bard, by Mr. Waring, published in a series of letters in the Cambrian Newspaper, 1827. Williams's memory had deceived him, both as to the year and time of the day;—for he spoke of it as an evening party, and as having been after the publication of his poems,—which were not published till 1794. Such mistakes are easy, after a lapse of many years; but of the meeting there can be no doubt; and if Cowper had been in his better mood, there were

After breakfast they proceeded to St. Alban's; so far Rose accompanied them. "In the dark, and in a storm, at eight at night, they found themselves at their own back door."

CHAPTER XVII.

COWPER AT WESTON. INCREASE OF HIS MALADY. HAYLEY'S SECOND VISIT.

In the letter which informed Hayley of their safe return, Cowper said that "Chaos himself, even the Chaos of Milton, was not surrounded with more confusion, nor had a mind more completely in a hubbub than his own at that time. At our first arrival," said he[1], "after long absence, we found an hundred orders to servants necessary, a thousand things to be restored to their proper places, and an endless variety of *minutiæ* to be adjusted, which, though individually of little importance, are most momentous in the aggregate." This was written on the second day after his arrival, and on the third he wrote to Teedon, apologising for having left him so long without a written notice of their return. "Mrs. Unwin," said he, "still wants much of restoration, and there is still much in that particular to be prayed for. As to myself, my frame of mind continues such as it was before I went to Eartham, almost always low, and often inexpressibly dejected. My work is still in suspense, or to say truth, not yet begun; nor do I at present see that I am likely to have any leisure for such labours. But on this latter I do not ask you to pray, because you have already obtained sufficient assurances concerning it. God can enable me to do much in a short time; and that is the only hope I have of ever performing it at all."

Cowper had written from Eartham to tell Johnson that he had hopes of carrying Mrs. Unwin back in such a state of health as would consist with a little more diligence and constancy on his part in the work which he had undertaken. "I

few men to whom he would have listened, with more pleasure than to my old acquaintance, nor from whom he could have received information which would have interested him so much. It grieves me to think *what curious* knowledge, and how much of it, has probably perished with *poor old Edward* Williams!

[1] Sept. 21.

hank you," said he[2], "for setting my heart at rest from the lisquietude I felt, when I wrote last, on the score of time, est I should not be ready at the moment. I long, nevertheess, to be making a progress, and shall not allow myself to oiter merely because I am not pressed. In truth, I have no vish at present more sincere, or ardent, than to finish my Miltonic labours, that I may find myself at full leisure for poetry; having learned by experience, that to divide my attenion between two objects is to give neither of them a suffiient share of it." The engagement began to fret his spirits after his return, when, having none to relieve him, he found now much Mrs. Unwin needed his attention.

A week after his first note to Teedon, he says to him[3], "Since I wrote last, I have been completely deprived of all the little encouragement to my work that I could gather both from your notices and my own. Other encouragement I have received; but while Mrs. Unwin continues weak as she is, am little the better for any. Uninterrupted leisure is necessary to such studies, and such leisure is to me impossible. If God has spoken, it will be done. The event will soon show, for the time grows short, and makes it necessary to decide."

The Olney schoolmaster may have been an enthusiast, and have supposed that he actually received from Heaven the intimations which he was presumptuous enough to seek, (for if the heart is deceitful, the imagination is not less so;) or he may have deemed it allowable and even meritorious to employ pious fraud for the purpose of encouraging one who stood so lamentably in need of comfort; and consistently with either case, he may have been more or less influenced by the pleasure and advantage which resulted from making himself a person of some consequence to "the Squire,"—Sir Cowper seems to have lost his title after his removal to Weston. There had been a time when, owing to Mrs. Unwin's discretion, Cowper was never mentioned in Olney but with the highest respect[4]; but after her faculties began to fail, there were some who played upon him, and some who preyed upon him, and some who spread tales of him as disparaging as they were false[5].

[2] Aug. 21. [3] Sept. 29. [4] Early Productions, p. 63.

[5] Such was a story that he had planned an elopement with Lady Austen, and that the carriage in which they were to have gone off was waiting in the adjoining lane, when Mrs. Unwin discovered the design in time to prevent it. There was a farmer's daughter, of some prettiness and more

Vain as the schoolmaster was, he appears to have kept the secret of his mysterious communications with a degree of prudence which is not often found in connexion with so much egregious conceit. He submitted to Cowper, at this time, an attack of his own upon Peter Pindar, for his poem on the King's visit to Whitbread's brewery. Cowper, who was perfectly master of himself upon all subjects but one, replied that it had amused him as much as he was capable of being amused at the time he read it; but he added, "I should not suppose Mr. Whitbread a likely man to interest himself at all on such a subject, or that it would be worth your while to present your verses to him." Such was this poor man's vanity, that he offered his services to vindicate Cowper's Homer against the reviewers. The offer was thus courteously declined, "As to the reviewers, I determined before I published, that whatever treatment I might receive from them, I would never touch the pen in my own vindication; and am equally resolved that no friend of mine shall ever do it with my consent. They have belied me. The learned will know that they have; but to convince the unlearned of it would be impossible. Therefore let them rest." Yet while he thus dexterously answered a man whom he knew to be in this matter as ignorant and incompetent as he was conceited, he nevertheless consulted him as a person who received communications from above.

He had now fixed a time for setting doggedly to his work, but neither this resolution nor Teedon's encouragement availed. "Yesterday," said he to Hayley[6], "was a day of assignation with myself,—the day of which I said some days before it came, 'when that day comes I will begin my dissertations.' Accordingly when it came I prepared to do so; filled a letter-case with fresh paper, furnished myself with a pretty good pen, and replenished my ink-bottle; but partly from one cause, and partly from another, chiefly, however, from distress and dejection, after writing and obliterating about six lines, in the composition of which I spent near an hour, I was obliged to relinquish the attempt. An attempt so unsuccessful could have no other effect than to dishearten me, and it has had that effect to such a degree, that I know not when I shall find courage

pertness, who was sometimes asked to dinner at the Lodge, and she and her family spread reports all over the country, that Mr. Cowper had offered her marriage.

[6] Oct. 2.

to make another. At present I shall certainly abstain, since at present I cannot well afford to expose myself to the danger of a fresh mortification." This failure of his own power he imputed in some degree to the weather, and the season. "A bad night," said he, "succeeded by an east wind, and a sky all in sables, have such an effect on my spirits, that if I did not consult my own comfort more than yours, I should not write to-day. In truth, one day excepted, I have not seen the day when I have been cheerful since I left you. My spirits, I think, are almost constantly lower than they were. The approach of winter is perhaps the cause; and if it is, I have nothing better to expect for a long time to come."

But another cause was stated to Teedon[7]. "I sat down to my work on Monday, with a fixed purpose to begin; determined too not to relinquish it for any slight impediments that might present themselves. But it was in vain. Perpetual and unavoidable interruptions were partly the reason, but much more an absolute inability. My spirits are not good enough, nor my mind collected enough for composition of any kind. How should they be so? when I never wake without words that are a poignard in my bosom, and the pain of which I feel all the day, Mrs. Unwin's approaching and sudden death the constant subject of them! In vain I pray to be delivered from these distressing experiences; they are only multiplied upon me the more, and the more pointed.

"I feel myself, in short, the most unpitied, the most unprotected, and the most unacknowledged outcast of the human race.

"You now know how it is with me. When it is better you shall know that too; but I expect nothing, or nothing but misery.

"Mrs. Unwin is at present as well as usual: perhaps she is even a little better; but the nature of her disorder is such, that it keeps me in continual fear. In one moment all may be undone again, and I left desolate."

In his next communication he says[8], "Dear Sir, I write to you from the same deeps as before, but rather less sensible of being there. Nothing, I mean, has occurred in the course of my experience[9] that has had the least tendency to alter my feel-

[7] Oct. 3. [8] Oct. 7. [9] The word is used in its sectarian meaning.

ings for the better; but I have lately put m ' into a cours of bark, as I always do at this season of the year, and generall find some little benefit from it. Time and the pen have bee my only remedies for the deepest wounds that ever soul re ceived, these many years; and the pen is now forbidden me or, which is the same thing, I am providentially precluded fron the use of it.

"Mrs. Unwin, I thank God, continues as well as she was but still her feebleness is a great distress to us both. I do no find that your prayers for her recovery obtain any encouragin answer."

Upon Hayley's sending him some verses at this time, whicl he praised as being "sweet as the honey that they accompanied," he said[10], "when shall I be able to do the like? Perhaps when my Mary, like your Tom, shall cease to be an invalid, I may recover a power, at least, to do something.—I began a letter to you yesterday, my dearest brother, and proceeded through two sides of the sheet; but so much of my nervous fever found its way into it, that looking it over this morning, I determined not to send it. I have risen, though not in good spirits, yet in better than I generally do of late, and therefore will not address you in the melancholy tone that belongs to my worst feelings.—Your wishes to disperse my melancholy would, I am sure, prevail, did that event depend on the warmth and sincerity with which you frame them; but it has baffled both wishes and prayers, and those the most fervent that could be made, so many years, that the case seems hopeless."

Three days after the date of this letter to Hayley, he writes to Teedon[11], "Dear sir, on Saturday you saw me a little better than I had been when I wrote last; but the night following brought with it an uncommon deluge of distress, such as entirely overwhelmed and astonished me. My horrors were not to be described. But on Sunday, while I walked with Mrs. Unwin and my cousin[12] in the orchard, it pleased God to enable me once more to approach Him in prayer, and I prayed silently for every thing that lay nearest my heart with a considerable degree of liberty. Nor did I let slip the occasion of praying for you.

"*This experience* I take to be a fulfilment of those words:

[10] *Oct.* 13. [11] Oct. 16. [12] Johnson.

"'*The ear of the Lord is open to them that fear him, and He will hear their cry.*'

"The next morning, at my waking, I heard these:

"'*Fulfil thy promise to me.*'

"And ever since I was favoured with that spiritual freedom to make my requests known to God, I have enjoyed some quiet, though not uninterrupted by threatenings of the enemy.

"Mrs. Unwin has had a good night, and is in tolerable spirits this morning."

The words which Cowper supposed to have been fulfilled, were probably some which the schoolmaster had communicated to him as an answer received to his prayers, and which had been entered accordingly in his register. The effect is alluded to in his next letter to Mr. Newton, to whom he had not written before since his return from Sussex.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 18, 1792.

I thought that the wonder had been all on my side, having been employed in wondering at your silence, as long as you at mine. Soon after our arrival at Eartham, I received a letter from you, which I answered, if not by the return of the post, at least in a day or two. Not that I should have insisted on the ceremonial of letter for letter, during so long a period, could I have found leisure to double your debt; but while there, I had no opportunity for writing, except now and then a short one; for we breakfasted early, studied Milton as soon as breakfast was over, and continued in that employment till Mrs. Unwin came forth from her chamber, to whom all the rest of my time was necessarily devoted. Our return to Weston was on the nineteenth of last month, according to your information. You will naturally think that, in the interval, I must have had sufficient leisure to give you notice of our safe arrival. But the fact has been otherwise. I have neither been well myself, nor is Mrs. Unwin, though better, so much improved in her health, as not still to require my continual assistance. My disorder has been the old one, to which I have been subject so many years, and especially about this season,—a nervous fever; not, indeed, so oppressive as it has sometimes proved, but sufficiently alarming both to Mrs. Unwin and myself, and such as made it neither easy nor

proper for me to make much use of my pen, while it continued. At present I am tolerably free from it; a blessing for which I believe myself partly indebted to the use of James's powder, in small quantities; and partly to a small quantity of laudanum, taken every night; but chiefly to a manifestation of God's presence vouchsafed to me a few days since; transient, indeed, and dimly seen, through a mist of many fears and troubles, but sufficient to convince me, at least while the Enemy's power is a little restrained, that He has not cast me off for ever.

Our visit was a pleasant one; as pleasant as Mrs. Unwin's weakness, and the state of my spirits, never very good, would allow. As to my own health, I never expected that it would be much improved by the journey; nor have I found it so. Some benefit, indeed, I hoped; and, perhaps, a little more than I found. But the season was, after the first fortnight, extremely unfavourable, stormy, and wet; and the prospects, though grand and magnificent, yet rather of a melancholy cast, and consequently not very propitious to me. The cultivated appearance of Weston suits my frame of mind far better than wild hills that aspire to be mountains, covered with vast unfrequented woods, and here and there affording a peep between their summits at the distant ocean. Within doors all was hospitality and kindness, but the scenery *would* have its effect; and though delightful in the extreme to those who had spirits to bear it, was too gloomy for me.

Yours, my dear friend,

Most sincerely, W. C.

His cousin Johnson, who had returned with him from Eartham, and remained with him about four weeks, left him at this time, with a promise of returning shortly. "My dear Johnny," Cowper writes to him[13], "you are too useful when you are here not to be missed on a hundred occasions daily; and too much domesticated with us, not to be regretted always. I hope, therefore, that your month or six weeks will not be like many that I have known, capable of being drawn out into any length whatever, and productive of nothing but disappointment." He then told him that he had composed part of his sonnet to Romney, at which he had made daily attempts since he came back from Sussex; "even this small produce,"

[13] Oct. 19.

said he, "which my sterile intellect has hardly yielded at last, may serve to convince you that in point of spirits I am not worse. In fact, I am a little better. The powders and the laudanum together have, for the present at least, abated the fever that consumes them; and in measure as the fever abates, I acquire a less discouraging view of things, and with it a little power to exert myself."

The laudanum was taken in small doses; notwithstanding his distressful nights, he never abused that remedy, nor did his uncomfortable feelings ever tempt him to have recourse to stimulants of any kind. Indeed, he never tampered with his bodily complaints, when he knew them to be such; it was the miserable error of mistaking his sensations and fancies for spiritual impressions, which made him consult Teedon upon what he termed his experiences.. certainly not without faith in his responses, but without enough to counteract his own delusions, which now continually strengthened, and perhaps were the more confirmed by this mysterious intercourse. His next letter to the schoolmaster says[14], "In this world, at least with me, evil is abiding, and good transient. I have had distressing times, and not few, since the comfortable experience of yesterday se'nnight; and in one instance it has been so depreciated in my view, that I was able to build nothing upon it, but rather perverted it to my greater discomfiture. At present, however, I am in tolerable spirits, and I should have better, if the work enjoined me were not altogether at a stand. The non-performance of it is a burthen that always depresses me, and how to perform it, I find not; neither can I reconcile a providential deprivation of the means with a providential call to the undertaking. It is certain that Mrs. Unwin continuing helpless as she is, the thing is impracticable.

"If the weather will permit, we shall be glad of your company at dinner to day at four o'clock. William Kitchener is here, and will attend you home. But we leave you entirely at your option, and if you had rather wait till the weather becomes more settled, and the ways more passable, do so."

Cowper now described himself as proceeding "much after the old rate; rising cheerless and distressed in the morning, and brightening a little as the day went on[15]." "In the evenings," said he[16], "I read Baker's Chronicle to Mrs. Unwin, having

[14] Oct. 22. [15] To Mr. Johnson, Oct. 21. [16] To the same, Oct. 19.

no other history; and hope in time to be as well versed in it as his admirer, Sir Roger de Coverley." "Nothing done my dearest brother," he says to Hayley[17], "nor likely to be done at present; yet I purpose in a day or two to make another attempt, to which, however, I shall address myself with fear and trembling, like a man, who having sprained his wrist, dreads to use it. I have not, indeed, like such a man injured myself by any extraordinary exertion, but seem as much enfeebled as if I had. The consciousness that there is so much to do, and nothing done, is a burthen I am not able to bear. Milton especially is my grievance, and I might almost as well be haunted by his ghost, as goaded with continual reproaches for neglecting him. I will therefore begin; I will do my best and if, after all, that best prove good for nothing, I will even send the notes, worthless as they are, that I have made already a measure very disagreeable to myself, and to which nothing but necessity shall compel me."

The next bulletin to Teedon says[18], "You send me much that might refresh and encourage me—but nothing that does. The power with which the words are accompanied to you, is not exerted in my favour. But I endeavour to hold by them having nothing else to hold by. My nocturnal and morning experiences are such as they have long been; all my sleep is troubled, and when I wake, I am absorbed in terror. This morning I said to myself, soon after waking, 'God alone knows how much better it would have been for me never to have been born!' My best times are the afternoon and evening not because I am more spiritual, or have more hope, at these times than at others, but merely because the animal has been recruited by eating and drinking."

After an interval of five days[19], he says to the same person "By this time you no doubt expect a note from me and I write for that reason only, not because I have anything new to communicate. Nothing in the shape of alteration has occurred since I saw you. The notice you sent me may indeed be expected, for though it came unaccompanied with the effect, it certainly has the appearance of it. My spirits this morning are in some small degree better than usual, the wasps and hornets having been less busy about me at the time of waking than they generally are; but my views and prospects continue

[17] Oct. 28. [18] Nov. 2. [19] Nov. 7.

the same, and I see at present not a shadow of hope that I shall ever find opportunity to proceed with Milton. This is a great trouble to me, and a constant burthen upon my spirits, which added to Mrs. Unwin's distressing weakness (for such it is to her and therefore to me,) is as heavy as I well know how to bear."

It was now that the strength and sincerity of Cowper's affection for Mrs. Unwin were tried and proved. Their relative situation to each other had been reversed; she was the helpless person, and he the attendant and nurse. She had devoted herself to him at the cost of her health, and the debt of gratitude was repaid by his devoting himself to her at a greater sacrifice. From the time that she had taken him under her care, as long as her mind was unimpaired, she had no will but his, no "shadow of inclination" but for his good, or for whatever might minister to his comfort. Never was any affection more free from all taint of selfishness, more perfectly disinterested. When his malady required continual vigilance, her days and nights were given to him, regardless of the consequences to herself. But now, as her reasonable faculties decayed, her character underwent, in this respect, a total change, and she exacted constant attention from him, without the slightest consideration for his health, or state of mind, or any regard to the injurious effect which was perceptibly produced. Poor creatures that we are, even the strength of religious principle and virtuous habit fails us if reason fails! But there is this consolation for those who contemplate the most humiliating condition to which human nature can be reduced, that when that fails, moral responsibility ceases; and there remain for the afflicted, in sure reversion, deliverance in the course of nature,.. and in the course of Providence, God's mercy and the reward of the righteous.

"I wish," says Cowper to Mr. Rose[20], "that I were as industrious and as much occupied as you, though in a different way; but it is not so with me, Mrs. Unwin's great debility (who is not yet able to move without assistance) is of itself a hinderance such as would effectually disable me. Till she can work and read, and fill up her time as usual, (all which is at present entirely out of her power,) I may now and then find time to write a letter, but I shall write nothing more. I cannot sit with my pen in my hand, and my books before me,

[20] Nov. 9.

while she is in effect in solitude, silent, and looking at the fire. To this hinderance that other has been added, of which you are already aware,—a want of spirits, such as I have never known, when I was not absolutely laid by, since I commenced an author. How long I shall be continued in these uncomfortable circumstances, is known only to Him who, as he will, disposes of us all."

In the same melancholy strain he writes to Mr. Newton.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 11. 1792.

I am not so insensible of your kindness in making me an exception from the number of your correspondents, to whom you forbid the hope of hearing from you till your present labours are ended, as to make you wait longer for an answer to your last; which, indeed, would have had its answer before this time, had it been possible for me to write. But so many have demands upon me of a similar kind, and while Mrs. Unwin continues an invalid, my opportunities of writing are so few, that I am constrained to incur a long arrear to some with whom I would wish to be punctual. She can at present neither work nor read; and till she can do both, and amuse herself as usual, my own amusements of the pen must be suspended.

I, like you, have a work before me, and a work to which I should be glad to address myself in earnest, but cannot do it at present. When the opportunity comes, I shall, like you, be under a necessity of interdicting some of my usual correspondents, and of shortening my letters to the excepted few. Many letters and much company are incompatible with authorship, and the one as much as the other. It will be long, I hope, before the world is put in possession of a publication which you design should be posthumous.

Oh for the day when your expectations of my complete deliverance shall be verified! At present it seems very remote: so distant, indeed, that hardly the faintest streak of it is visible in my horizon. The glimpse with which I was favoured about a month since, has never been repeated; and the depression of my spirits has. The future appears gloomy as ever; and I seem to myself to be scrambling always in the dark, among rocks and precipices, without a guide, but with an enemy ever at my heels, prepared to push me headlong. Thus *I have spent* twenty years, but thus I shall not spend twenty

years more. Long ere that period arrives, the grand question concerning my everlasting weal or woe will be decided.

Adieu, my dear friend. I have exhausted my time, though not filled my paper.

Truly yours, W. C.

At this time Teedon seems to have advised that he should send to the press such notes on the two first books of the Paradise Lost as he had made. To this he objected[21], because the splendour of the edition required that the page should be kept clear; because almost all that could be done in the way of notes had been done by very able hands, and because it was impossible in notes to do justice to the doctrinal passages, which, he said, was the most important consideration of all. "But what," said he, "is my hope that I shall ever execute my intentions? Truly a leaf driven by the wind of a thousand tempests. The fever on my spirits, from which, except in the heat of the first part of August, I have hardly been free this half year, still continues, and distressed me more last night than at any period in all that time. I waked very often, and always after waking was almost bent double with misery. Yet in one of my short sleeps I dreamed that I had God's presence in a slight measure, and exclaimed under the impression of it,

"*'I know that Thou art infinitely gracious, but what will become of me?'*

"This fever keeps me always in terror, for it has ever been the harbinger of my worst indispositions. As to prayer, the very Collects you mention have been the prayers that I have generally used when I have felt the least encouragement to pray at all. But I may add, never with any sensible effect. In compliance, however, with your call to that service, I will use them again, and be careful not to omit them, at least till the time you mention is expired. Yet if faith be necessary to effectuate prayer, alas, what chance have mine!"

Poor Cowper's malady was too strong to be overcome by the faith which he would fain have placed in Teedon. After obeying his injunction more than a week, he reported to him the result[22]. "I have now persevered in the punctual performance of the duty of prayer as long, and I believe longer

[21] Nov. 13. [22] Nov. 21.

than the time which you specified. Whether any beneficial effect has followed, I cannot say. My wakings in the night have certainly been somewhat less painful and terrible than they were, but this I cannot help ascribing to the agency of an anodyne which I have constantly used lately at bed time. Of one thing however I am sure, which is, that I have had no spiritual anodyne vouchsafed to *me*. My nights having been somewhat less disturbed, my days have of course been such likewise; but a settled melancholy overclouds them all; nothing cheers me, nothing inspires me with hope. It is even miraculous in my own eyes that, always occupied as I am in the contemplation of the most distressing subjects, I am not absolutely incapacitated for the common offices of life.

"My purpose is to continue such prayer as I can make, although with all this reason to conclude that it is not accepted, and though I have been more than once forbidden in my own apprehension, by Him to whom it is addressed. You will tell me, that God never forbids any body to pray, but on the contrary, encourages all to do it. I answer—No. Some he does not encourage, and some he even forbids; not by words perhaps, but by a secret negative found only in their experience."

It is a proof of Cowper's good nature, that when the successor of the Northampton Clerk came with a petition at this time that he would be pleased to assist him with "a copy of Mortuary Verses, as he had assisted his predecessor,".. though two years had elapsed without such an application, and he had "well hoped that he was out of his office,".. and though "involved in many arrears on other subjects, and having very little dependence on his ability to write at all,".. he yet "reluctantly promised to comply," and fulfilled his promise.

"I proceed," says he to his cousin Johnson[23], "exactly as when you were here,—a letter now and then before breakfast, and the rest of my time all holiday; if holiday it may be called, that is spent chiefly in moping and musing, and 'forecasting the fashion of uncertain evils.'" Now and then something like a secret whisper appeared and encouraged him that his engagement concerning Milton would yet be performed. "You wish me warm in my work," said he to Hayley[24], "and I ardently wish the same; but when I shall be so, God only knows. My melancholy, which seemed a little alleviated for a

[23] Nov. 20. [24] Nov. 25.

few days, has gathered about me again, with as black a cloud as ever: the consequence is—absolute incapacity to begin."

The sanest patient could not have observed his own symptoms more carefully, nor given a more clear and coherent account of them to his physician, than Cowper noticed his own sleeping and waking imaginations, and reported them to the poor vain man whom he had taken for his spiritual adviser. "Dear Sir," he says[25], "since I wrote last, my experience has held the same tenor of despair, despondence and dejection; but having had a quiet night, my spirits are a little raised this morning. My nights, indeed, have lately been less infected with horrid dreams and wakings, and I would willingly hope that it is an answer to the prayers I offer, lifeless as they are. I shall not discontinue the practice, you may be sure, so long as I have even this encouragement to observe it.

"Two or three nights since I dreamed that I had God's presence largely, and seemed to pray with much liberty. I then proceeded dreaming about many other things, all vain and foolish; but at last I dreamed that recollecting my pleasant dream, I congratulated myself on the exact recollection that I had of my prayer, and of all that passed in it. But when I waked, not a single word could I remember. These words, were, however, very audibly spoken to me in the moment of waking,

Sacrum est quod dixi.

"It seems strange that I should be made to felicitate myself on remembering what in reality it was designed that I should not remember: for the single circumstance that my heart had been enlarged was all that remained with me.

"I thank you for sending your last notice immediately after you received it. It came very seasonably, when it was much wanted; not that any single word of all that are given you is ever sealed to me, but simple water is a cordial to a person fainting."

"Dear Sir[26], in your last experience, extraordinary as it was, I found nothing presumptuous. God is free to manifest himself, both in manner and measure as he pleases; and to you he is pleased to manifest himself uncommonly in both. It

[25] Nov. 28. [26] Dec. 4.

would be better with poor me, if, being the subject of so many of your manifestations, (for which I desire to be thankful both to God and you,) I were made in some small degree at least partaker of the comfort of them. But except that my nights are less molested than they used to be, I perceive at present no alteration at all for the better. My days are, many of them, stormy in the extreme, and the best of them are darkly clouded with melancholy.

"Still I am waiting for freedom of mind and spirit, as well as for leisure and opportunity, to proceed with Milton. Yet the answers you have received to your prayers on that subject have been so explicit, that I know not how to desire you to make it a matter of prayer again. It is certain, nevertheless, that without some great change both in my mind and outward circumstances, I shall never be able to perform that work, or never able to perform it well. My eyes too for a long time have been inflamed to a degree that would alone disable me for such a labour. God knows how much I feel myself in want of animal spirits, courage, hope, and all mutual requisites,—to a wonderful degree, considering the prayers that have been made, and the answers that have been obtained about it.

"You ought not to suffer anxiety on temporal accounts to rob you of your peace, as I suspect it has done lately. He that gives you so plentifully the bread of life, will he not give you the bread that perishes? Doubtless he will. Fear not."

"Dear Sir[27], I awoke this morning with these words relating to my work, loudly and distinctly spoken:—

"'*Apply assistance in my case, indigent and necessitous.*'

"And about three mornings since with these:—

"'*It will not be by common and ordinary means.*'

"It seems better, therefore, that I should wait till it shall please God to set my wheels in motion, than make another beginning only to be obliterated like the two former.

"I have also heard these words on the same subject,—

"'*Meantime raise an expectation and desire of it among the people.*'

"My experiences this week have been for the most part dreadful in the extreme, and to such a degree, in one instance, that poor Mrs. Unwin has been almost as much in an agony

[27] Dec. 8.

as myself. Yet some little abatements have been intermingled; but very slight, so slight as almost to leave me hopeless as they found me. I cannot, indeed, be properly said to possess any hope at all; for if I seem for a short season to have one, it is always in the enemy's power with one puff to blow it all away, and he never fails to do it."

It was some relief to him when he was assured that there was no reason why he should make himself uneasy concerning Milton, for the artists who were engaged for the work were not likely to be very expeditious; and as it was to be published in parts, a small portion only would be wanted from him at once. That labour, he thought, would not be too heavy for him, if he had health and leisure. "But the season," said he[28], "is unfavourable to me respecting the former, and Mrs. Unwin's present weakness allows me less of the latter than the occasion seems to call for. The season of the year is particularly adverse to me, yet not in itself, perhaps, more adverse than any other: but the approach of it always reminds me of the same season in the dreadful 1773, and in the more dreadful 1787. I cannot help terrifying myself with doleful misgivings and apprehensions; nor is the enemy negligent to seize all the advantage that the occasion gives him. Thus, hearing much from him, and having little or no sensible support from God, I suffer inexpressible things till January is over. And even then, whether increasing years have made me more liable to it, or despair the longer it lasts grows naturally darker, I find myself more inclined to melancholy than I was a few years since. God only knows where this will end; but where it is likely to end, unless He interpose powerfully in my favour, all may know."

But while Cowper thus communicated his dark forebodings to Mr. Newton, he reserved the details of his "experiences" for one from whom he was sure of receiving no remonstrance, or representation of the unreasonableness and danger of the course which he was now pursuing, and by whom all would be received and commented on as matter of fact. His next report[29] to the schoolmaster says, "you have waited thus long for a note from me, only because I have nothing to communicate but my distress, which it seems more charitable to keep to myself. At last, however, distressed as I still am, I write, lest

[28] To Mr. Newton, Dec. 9. [29] Dec. 14.

I should cause you greater trouble by my silence. Yesterday, having had a quiet night, I was tolerably well in spirits; but, yesterday excepted, I have had a woful week, and am this day as dejected as ever. My nights are almost all haunted with notices of great affliction at hand,—of what kind I know not; but in degree such as I shall with extreme difficulty sustain, and hardly at last find deliverance. At four this morning, I started out of a dream, in which I seemed sitting before the fire, and very close to it, in great trouble; when suddenly stamping violently with my foot, and springing suddenly from my seat, I awoke, and heard these words,—

"'*I hope the Lord will carry me through it.*'

"This needs no interpretation. It is plainly a forewarning of woe to come; and though you may tell me I ought to take comfort from the hope expressed in the words, yet truly I cannot. I know too well what it is to be carried through affliction, as to be left to feel all its bitterness; and after the thousand experiences that I have had of that sort, tremble at the approach of a new one. Beside which, the notice being general, and no particular quarter signified, from which I may expect the cloud that threatens me, my imagination is left free to create an endless train of horrible phantoms, with which it terrifies itself; and which are, some of them, perhaps, more to be dreaded than the reality.

"The promise, that in God we shall have peace, has certainly a comfortable aspect on the future; but He knows, that I never have at present a moment's peace in Him.

"Mrs. Unwin is pretty well this morning, except that she shares with me in my alarms. She joins me in kind remembrances."

"Dear Sir, the day has not risen upon me since I wrote last, when I could have addressed you in any other language than that of the deepest melancholy; nor do I write now, because I have anything more acceptable to say, but merely that you may know I am not unmindful of you. My views of the future are still as disheartening as ever. God is as far from me, and consequently all spiritual relief, as ever. My distress, before I rise in the morning, is hardly supportable; and such as it is when I rise, it often continues through the day, though sometimes the incidents of it call my attention from *myself a little,* and a slight abatement is the consequence.

But comforts of this kind afford me none in affliction; because the remedy is not that of the good Physician, but such as the world furnishes to its own. Milton is still a mountain on my shoulders; and it seems to me, that if the new year brings with it no favourable change for me, either in outward circumstances or mental qualifications, I must at last relinquish him. But we expect Mr. and Mrs. Rose from London to-morrow. They will be here by dinner time, and purpose to stay about ten days. With him I mean to converse on this subject; for there is no man better qualified, in respect of acquaintance with the literary world, to give me counsel."

Thus it appeared more and more that in his diseased state of mind, the engagement with Johnson, instead of keeping him pleasantly employed, as Mrs. Unwin expected when it was formed, had become a cause of uneasiness and irritation, which even the publisher's assurances, that there was time enough before him, could not allay. Such an assurance cheered him for the day; but then the consciousness that he had a task to perform returned upon him; and that it was not like his translation of Homer, set by himself, and to be performed at his own will, but a matter of contract which he was bound to. "The year ninety-two," said he to Hayley[30], "shall stand chronicled in my remembrance as the most melancholy that I have ever known, except the few weeks that I spent at Eartham; and such it has been principally, because, being engaged to Milton, I felt myself no longer free for any other engagement."

The new year opened with better omens to his fancy. "This morning, he writes[31], "I am in rather a more cheerful frame of mind than usual, having had two notices of a more comfortable cast than the generality of mine. I waked, saying,

"'*I shall perish:*'

which was immediately answered by a vision of a wine glass, and these words,

"'*A whole glass.*'

an allusion no doubt to the famous story of Mrs. Honeywood.

"Soon after, I heard these—

"'*I see in* this *case just occasion of pity.*'"

The "famous story," by which Cowper interpreted this illu-

[30] Dec. 26. [31] To Teedon, Jan. 1, 1793.

sion, and from which the waking vision that recalled it probably itself arose, is related by Fuller, who enumerates Mary, the wife of Robert Honeywood, of Charing in Kent, among the memorable persons of that county, as "abundantly entitled to memorability, for having at her decease three hundred and sixty-seven[32] persons lawfully descended from her." He deemed her however "more memorable on another account, to wit, for patient weathering out the tempest of a troubled conscience, whereon," says he, "a remarkable story dependeth. Being much afflicted in mind, many ministers repaired to her, and amongst the rest Reverend Master John Fox, than whom no more happy an instrument to set the joints of a broken spirit. All his counsels proved ineffectual, insomuch that, in the agony of her soul, having a Venice glass in her hand, she brake forth into this expression: 'I am as surely damned, as this glass is broken!' which she immediately threw with violence to the ground. Here happened a wonder; the glass rebounded again, and was taken up whole and entire. I confess it is possible (though difficult) so casually to throw as brittle a substance, that, lighting on the edge, it may be preserved; but happening immediately in that juncture of time, it seemed little less than miraculous. However, the gentlewoman took no comfort thereat, (as some have reported, and more have believed;) but continued a long time after,—(short is long to people in pain;)—in her former disconsolate condition, without any amendment: until at last, God, the great Clock-keeper of Time, who findeth out the fittest minutes for his own mercies, suddenly shot comfort like lightning into her soul; which, once entered, ever remained therein; (God doth not palliate cures; what He heals, it holds;) so that she led the remainder of her life in spiritual gladness. This she herself told to the Reverend Father Thomas Morton, Bishop of Durham, from whose mouth I have received this relation."

[32] "Sixteen of her own body, one hundred and fourteen grandchildren, two hundred and twenty-eight in the third generation, and nine in the fourth." Yet she was "much outstript in point of fruitfulness, (though she had a child for every day in the year, though leap year, and one over,) —by Dame Hester Temple, the lady of Sir Thomas Temple, of Stowe, in, Buckinghamshire, who, having four sons and nine daughters, lived to see seven hundred descendants. Reader," says Fuller, "I speak within compass, and have left myself a reserve, having bought the truth hereof by a wager I lost."

Cowper's malady was more deeply rooted; the comfort which he derived from one illusion was destroyed by the next disheartening one. Perhaps no other case of insanity was ever recorded with such curious power of self-observation. It appears from the next communication to Teedon, that he had some minor engagement with Johnson, .. possibly for the Analytical Review. "Dear Sir," he says[33], "if you are called to carry my troubles, it is no wonder that you feel yourself sometimes immersed in sorrow and despondency. As for me, I find no sensible relief at all, except what I must attribute to the effect of an opiate, in which I mean to indulge myself till this month be over.

"I have had a small matter to do for Johnson in the literary way this half year, and through mere incapacity and lowness of spirits, have been obliged to neglect it. In other days it would have cost me but a single morning. Last night I received a letter from him requiring it speedily; and this morning I awoke out of a dream that has disabled me more than ever. I would relate it, but have not time: its tendency, however, was to inculcate the doctrine of difficulties to be surmounted by unassisted me, and therefore insurmountable.

"These experiences kill all the little comfort which the present moment, though bad yet not so bad as I am made to expect, might otherwise yield me. Time passes; I have many things to do, one of them arduous indeed; I mean Milton. God is silent; prayer obtains no answer; one discouragement treads on the heels of another, and the consequence is that I do nothing but prognosticate my own destruction."

The next is in a still more unhappy strain[34].

"Dear Sir, nothing new has occurred in my experience since we saw you, one circumstance excepted of the distressing kind. I have often told you that the notices given to you come to me unattended by any sensible effect; yet believing that they are from God, and gracious answers to your prayers, I have been accustomed to lean a little upon them, and have been the better enabled to sustain the constant pressure of my burthens. But of late I have been totally deprived even of that support, having been assured that though they are indeed from God, so far from being designed as comforts to me, to me they are reproaches, biting sarcasms, sharp strokes of irony,—in short,

[33] Jan. 4, 1793. [34] Jan. 25.

the deadliest arrows to be found in the quiver of the Almighty To you indeed they are manna, and to Mrs. Unwin, becaus you are both at peace with God; but to me, who have unpar donably offended him, they are a cup of deadly wine, agains which there is no antidote. So the cloudy pillar was light t Israel, but darkness and horror to Egypt.

"I have nothing in the shape of an answer to this sugge tion. My experience, the desertion that I endure, my frequen agonies of despair, all tend to give it credit and confirmatio —Why have they never given me in any single instance th least sensible comfort? Do they not profess to have me fo their object? And yet I alone receive no benefit from them.

"This has much the appearance under which I have bee taught to view them; and those in particular which seeme to encourage me in my work, and to promise me success I attempted it, have been twice demonstrated to have no suc meaning, or not to have meant it seriously, by the complet failure of my endeavours.

"In other respects I am much as usual, and so is Mrs. Un win, except that this sad and dreary season is hurtful to u both by confining us."

Even, however, at this time he could still interest himse upon that great work which had afforded him constant an happy occupation during so many years. When he told Hayle that his idleness, or more truly his difficulties, were pro against all the exhortations that he received from Eartham, h added[35], "Something indeed I do. I play at push-pin wit Homer every morning before breakfast, fingering and polishin as Paris did his armour." Johnson had said that the translatio would "begin to be reviewed in the next Analytical, and th he hoped the reviewal would not offend him." "By this," sai Cowper, "I understand that, if I am not offended, it will b owing more to my own equanimity than to the mildness o the critic. So be it! He will put an opportunity of victory ove myself into my hands, and I will endeavour not to lose it." This, however, was no effort of self-command in him; fo though well pleased with praise, there is not in his letters a single passage from which it can be inferred that he was at an time annoyed by censure. The reason wherefore private criticism vexed him when it recommended alterations in his unpublished

[35] Jan. 28.

ns was, that it put him in many cases to unprofitable
.ble, and perhaps required him in some to yield his own judg-
.t, rather than contend for things trifling in single instances,
in the whole of a composition of more importance than
ions not accustomed to the art of poetry themselves can
ly be made to understand.

[e had now some prospect of profiting by his past labours.
nson had proposed not only to print a handsome quarto
ion of his poems in two volumes, but to make him a present
the entire profits. This was intended to accompany a
nd edition of his Homer, and Abbot's portrait was to be
raved for it. Cowper demurred at the portrait. "John-
's plan," said he to Mr. Rose[36], "of prefixing my phiz to
new edition of my poems is by no means a pleasant one
ne; and so I told him in a letter I sent him from Eartham,
which I assured him that my objections to it would not be
ly surmounted. But if you judge that it may really have
effect in advancing the sale, I would not be so squeamish
o suffer the spirit of prudery to prevail in me to his dis-
antage. Somebody told an author, (I forget whom,) that
re was more vanity in refusing his picture than in granting
on which he instantly complied. I do not perfectly feel
the force of the argument; but it shall content me that he
"

.t the winding up his accounts for the Homer, (which Mr.
e transacted for him,) he says[37], "few of my concerns have
a so happily concluded. I am now satisfied with my book-
er, as I have substantial cause to be, and account myself in
d hands; a circumstance as pleasant to me as any other
; of the business; for I love dearly to be able to confide with
ny heart, in those with whom I am connected, of what kind
er the connexion may be." On this occasion it appears that
nson's intentions were carried into effect in a different way
n what he had proposed, but equally to Cowper's satisfaction.
.ting to his cousin of Norfolk, he says[38], "the long muster-
of my great and small ancestors I signed and dated, and
t up to Mr. Blue-mantle on Monday, according to your de-
. Such a pompous affair drawn out for my sake, reminds
of the old fable of the mountain in parturition, and a
ase the produce. Rest undisturbed, say I, their lordly,

[36] Nov. 9, 1792. [37] March 27. [38] April 11.

ducal, and royal dust! Had they left me something handsome, I should have respected them more. But perhaps they did not know that such a one as I should have the honour to be numbered among their descendants. Well! I have a little bookseller that makes me some amends for this deficiency. He has made me a present; an act of liberality which I take every opportunity to blazon, as it well deserves."

Lady Hesketh had been prevented from making her autumnal visit by the state of her health, which rendered it advisable for her to pass some time at Bath. "You know not what you lose," Cowper says to her[39], "by being absent from Weston at this moment. We have just received from Johnny a cask of the best Holland gin; and in a few days I shall receive from Charlotte Smith a present of her novel, not yet published, entitled the Old Manor House, in three volumes. How happy wouldst thou find thyself in the enjoyment of both these articles at once!" In a like cheerful strain he thanks his Norfolk kinsman for other presents of a different kind; one of which, neither Norfolk, nor Salisbury Plain, nor perhaps any part of England could at this time supply.

TO JOHN JOHNSON, ESQ.

Io Pæan!

MY DEAREST JOHNNY, Jan. 31, 1793.

Even as you foretold, so it came to pass. On Tuesday I received your letter, and on Tuesday came the pheasants; for which I am indebted in many thanks, as well as Mrs. Unwin, both to your kindness and to your kind friend Mr. Copeman.

> In Copeman's ear this truth let Echo tell,—
> "Immortal bards like mortal pheasants well:"
> And when his clerkship's out, I wish him herds
> Of golden clients for his golden birds.

Our friends the Courtenays have never dined with us since their marriage, *because* we have never asked them; and we have never asked them, *because* poor Mrs. Unwin is not so equal to the task of providing for and entertaining company as before this last illness. But this is no objection to the arrival here of a bustard; rather it is a cause for which we shall be particularly glad to see the monster. It will be a handsome present

[39] Jan. 19.

to *them*. So let the bustard come, as the Lord Mayor of London said of the hare, when he was hunting,—"Let her come a'God's name! I am not afraid of her!"

Adieu, my dear cousin and caterer. My eyes are terribly bad; else I had much more to say to you.

Ever affectionately yours, W. C.

On the second day only after this sportive letter had been written, the insane mind predominated again, and he wrote thus to Teedon[40].

"It is with great unwillingness that I write, knowing that I *can* say nothing but what will distress you. I despair of every thing, and my despair is perfect, because it is founded on a persuasion, that there is no effectual help for me, even in God.

"From four this morning till after seven I lay meditating terrors, such terrors as no language can express, and as no heart I am sure but mine ever knew. My very finger-ends tingled with it, as indeed they often do. I then slept and dreamed a long dream, in which I told Mrs. U. with many tears that my salvation is impossible, for the reason given above. I recapitulated, in the most impassioned accent and manner, the unexampled severity of God's dealings with me in the course of the last twenty years, especially in the year 73, and again in 86, and concluded all with observing that I *must* infallibly perish, and that the Scriptures which speak of the insufficiency of man to save himself can never be understood *unless* I perish.

"I then made a sudden transition in my dream to one of the public streets in London, where I was met by a dray; the forehorse of the team came full against me, and in violent anger I damn'd the drayman for it.

"Such are my nocturnal experiences, and my daily ones are little better.—I know that I have much fever, but it is a fever for which there is no cure, and is as much the afflictive hand of God upon me, as any other circumstance of my distress.

"I thank you for your two last. Delay is no denial indeed; but in extremities such as mine, it is very severe and hard to bear."

He now expressed his concern lest the schoolmaster's health should suffer, by the earnest solicitude, and the frequent mortification and disappointments which he underwent on his account. "But if God indeed employ you," said he[41], "and if

[40] Feb. 2, 1793. [41] Feb. 8.

He himself interest you in my cause, as I trust he does, then all fear is groundless." He tells him that finding his nights intolerable, he had again had recourse to a few drops of laudanum, and had been somewhat relieved; but spiritual relief seemed as distant as ever. "While I can amuse myself with a pen or a book I am easy; but the moment I lay them down I begin instantly to ruminate on the various experiences of the last twenty years, and among them find a multitude that seem absolutely and for ever to forbid all hope of mercy. Some of them are indeed so emphatically forbidding, that unless it shall please God himself to explain them to a different sense, and to a sense of which they do not appear to be susceptible, I know not how it is possible that I should ever hope again; at least with stedfastness. While they are out of my mind, I may perhaps have something like a hope; but on the instant of recollection, even the strongest confidence must yield. For though all things are possible to God, it is not possible that he should save whom he has declared he will destroy."

The next is a more remarkable communication[42].

"Dear sir, my experience since I saw you affords, on recollection, nothing worthy to be sent to Olney, except the following notice, which I commit to writing and communicate as a kind of curiosity rather than for any other reason; though Milton, who is at present an interesting character to us both, is undoubtedly the subject of it.

"I waked the other morning with these words, distinctly spoken to me:

"'*Charles the Second, though he was or wished to be accounted a man of fine taste and an admirer of the Arts, never saw or expressed a wish to see the man whom he would have found alone superior to all the race of man.*'

"But in such a notice as this I find nothing to comfort, nothing spiritual. A thousand such would do me no real service. A single word of Christ is worth all that can be said either by men or angels concerning all the men of genius that ever lived; but such word I seldom hear."

In this instance Cowper perceived of what materials his morning experiences were made; but if he had been more capable of reasoning justly upon that perception, any such approach to sanity would have been counteracted by the belief

[42] Feb. 22.

which Mrs. Unwin now, as well as the poor schoolmaster, entertained in the dangerous superstition that possessed him. He could write sanely and playfully about his dreams at this very time to Hayley[43]. "Oh you rogue," he says to him, "what would you give to have such a dream about Milton, as I had about a week since? I dreamed that being in a house in the city, and with much company, looking towards the lower end of the room from the upper end of it, I descried a figure, which I immediately knew to be Milton's. He was very gravely, but very neatly attired in the fashion of his day, and had a countenance which filled me with those feelings that an affectionate child has for a beloved father: such, for instance, as Tom has for you. My first thought was wonder, where he could have been concealed so many years; my second, a transport of joy to find him still alive; my third, another transport to find myself in his company; and my fourth, a resolution to accost him. I did so, and he received me with a complacence, in which I saw equal sweetness and dignity. I spoke of his Paradise Lost, as every man must, who is worthy to speak of it at all, and told him a long story of the manner in which it affected me, when I first discovered it, being at that time a school-boy. He answered me by a smile, and a gentle inclination of his head. He then grasped my hand affectionately, and with a smile that charmed me, said, 'Well, you for your part will do well also.' At last recollecting his great age (for I understood him to be two hundred years old) I feared that I might fatigue him by much talking; I took my leave, and he took his with an air of the most perfect good breeding. His person, his features, his manner, were all so perfectly characteristic, that I am persuaded an apparition of him could not represent him more completely. This may be said to have been one of the dreams of Pindus, may it not?"

Cowper saw clearly here that this was such a dream as his daily thoughts were likely to produce, only in its way "a kind of curiosity,"—"one of the dreams of Pindus." But he received as mysterious all that bore, or could be made to bear relation to the single point on which his mind was diseased. "In less than a week," he says to Teedon[44], "I was visited with a horrible dream, in which I seemed to be taking a final leave of my dwelling, and every object with which I have been

[43] Feb. 24. [44] March 1.

most familiar, on the evening before my execution. I felt the tenderest regret at the separation, and looked about for something durable to carry with me as a memorial. The iron hasp of the garden door presenting itself, I was on the point of taking that; but recollecting that the heat of the fire in which I was going to be tormented would fuse the metal, and that it would therefore only serve to increase my insupportable misery, I left it. I then awoke in all the horror with which the reality of such circumstances would fill me."

In another communication he says[45], "a temporary suspension of terror was audibly announced to me some time since, and, except in one or two instances, has been fulfilled; but in other respects I perceive no difference. Neither waking nor sleeping have I any communications from God, but am perfectly a withered tree, fruitless and leafless. A consciousness that He exists,—that once He favoured me, but that I have offended to the forfeiture of all such mercies, is ever present with me: and of such thoughts consists the whole of my religious experiences."

This interval was, as might be expected, of no long continuance; and he informs Teedon that the return of those terrible impressions had been announced to him in these words:

"*I have got my old wakings again!*"

"If they continue, they will completely disqualify me for all sorts of writing. It was owing to them that I was idle all the winter, which has thrown me behind to such a degree, that I am now always in a hurry. In short I find so little done in answer to so many prayers, and for the accomplishment of so many promises, of which I have now almost four quarto volumes, that I am perfectly at a loss to understand the dispensation. The peace of three persons at least is concerned, and yet all remains as it was. Many years I have been threatened with a season worse than all the past, a season that shall be fatal and final; and still I am threatened with such a season. My only hope is founded in Mrs. Unwin's acceptableness with God, and yours. For as to my own, unconnected with my interest in her prayers and yours, I have too mean an opinion of it to suppose that I can build at all upon it.

"In the winter I expected to be crushed before spring, and

[45] March 14.

now I expect to be crushed before winter. I were better never to have been born than to live such a life of terrible expectation."

He now dreamed that Dr. Kerr prescribed death to him, as the only preventive of madness; .. the only cure for it, in his case, it now too surely was!—"Your experiences," he says to Teedon[46], "have a difference in them. If you are cast down, you are comforted and raised again. But as for mine, they proceed in one dull train, unvaried, unless sometimes by darker shades than usual. Thus it has happened to me since I saw you. During two days I rejected entirely all your notices; and if I have since experienced some little degree of belief in them, it has not been on account of the smallest encouragement, for I have received none; but perhaps because the temptation to cast them away is abated."

And now Cowper began to think it "strange that the prayers and promises of some years should remain still so entirely unanswered and unaccomplished;" and that his own experience and the schoolmaster's should make a series of exact contradictions. "You," said he[47], "receive assurances almost as often as you pray of spiritual good things intended for me; and I feel in the mean time every thing that denotes a man an outcast and a reprobate. I dream in the night that God has rejected me finally, and that all promises and all answers to prayer made for me, are mere delusions. I wake under a strong and clear conviction that these communications are from God, and in the course of the day nothing occurs to invalidate that persuasion. As I have said before, there is a mystery in this matter that I am not able to explain. I believe myself the only instance of a man to whom God will promise every thing, and perform nothing."

This was a notion over which he had brooded for the last seven years, and he reasoned upon it thus to the poor simple man whom he had chosen not for his philosopher, but in a certain sense for his guide and friend. "[48]I have already told you that I heard a word in the year 86, which has been a stone of stumbling to me ever since. It was this:

"'*I will promise you any thing.*'

"This word taken in connexion with my experience, such as it has been ever since, seems so exactly accomplished, that

[46] March 30. [47] May 16. [48] July 2.

it leaves me no power at all to believe the promises made to you. You will tell me that it was not from God. By what token am I to prove that? My experience verifies it. In the day I am occupied with my studies, which, whatever they are, are certainly not of a spiritual kind. In the night I generally sleep well, but wake always under a terrible impression of the wrath of God, and for the most part with words that fill me with alarm, and with the dread of woes to come. What is there in all this that in the least impeaches the truth of the threatening I have mentioned? *I will promise you any thing*:—that is to say, much as I hate you, and miserable as I design to make you, I will yet bid you be of good cheer and expect the best, at the same time that I will show you no favour. This, you will say, is unworthy of God. Alas! He is the fittest to judge what is worthy of him, and what is otherwise. I can say but this, that his conduct and dealings are totally changed toward me. Once He promised me much, and was so kind to me at the same time, that I most confidently expected the performance. Now He promises me as much, but holds me always at an immense distance, and so far as I know, never deigns to speak to me. What conclusions can I draw from these premises, but that he who once loved now hates me, and is constantly employed in verifying the notice of 86, that is to say, in working distinctly contrary to his promises?

"This is the labyrinth in which I am always bewildered, and from which I have hardly any hope of deliverance."

There was no text in Scripture, he said, less calculated to comfort him, than that which promises comfort to the broken heart: "were there a text which promised it to the nether mill-stone, from such a text as that he might gather hope." Yet he described his spirits as tolerably well in the day, because he kept himself as much employed as he could; and, that together with the assistance which he had gained from despair, was his best remedy. But his hours of occupation were not now so regulated as to employ without fatiguing him. "Thou knowest, I dare say," he says to Lady Hesketh[49], "what it is to have a head weary with thinking. Mine is so fatigued by breakfast time that, three days out of four, I am utterly incapable of sitting down to my desk again for any purpose whatever." This was not to be wondered at, seeing that he rose every

[49] May 7.

morning at six, and fagged till near eleven before he breakfasted; and in consequence was by that time exhausted. "You will say," he says[50], "breakfast before you work, and then your work will not fatigue you." I answer, "perhaps I might, and your counsel would probably prove beneficial; but I cannot spare a moment for eating in the early part of the morning, having no other time for study."

The business which engrossed him thus, was revising his Homer for a second edition, and writing notes upon it; and his reason for despatching all that he did in the day before breakfast, was that his whole attention might be given to Mrs. Unwin from the time that she rose. Such an inmate as Lady Hesketh, or such a neighbour as Lady Austen, might have been of the most important service to him now; and if Lady Hesketh had been aware how much her presence was needed, she would undoubtedly have set aside all other considerations, and have hastened to Weston. "My dearest cousin," Cowper says to her[51], "you will not, you say, come to us now; and you tell us not when you will. These assignations *sine die* are bad things, that I can neither grasp, nor get any comfort from them. Know you not that hope is the next best thing to enjoyment? Give us then a hope, and a determinate time for that hope to fix on, and we will endeavour to be satisfied."

Lady Hesketh was aware that things were going on ill, in one respect, at Weston Lodge, though she knew not, and probably no one besides Teedon and Mrs. Unwin knew, the state of Cowper's mind. She was aware that Mrs. Unwin was no longer capable of managing their expenditure, and she had reason to believe that they were imposed upon, and their means misspent; and this she hinted to her cousin. "Unless thou tell me," he replied[52], "who they are that eat me up alive, I can say nothing about it. In fact, I am eaten up by nothing but an enormous taxation, which has doubled the price of every thing, within my memory, and which makes it impossible for a man of small means, like me, to live at all like a gentleman upon his income."—"Thou canst not do better than send me the draft immediately," he says in the same letter; "for at this season of the year the money birds are full fledged, and fly at an immoderate rate: whole flocks of them disappear in a moment."

[50] To Hayley, May 21. [51] June 1. [52] Jan. 19.

Six months afterwards he says to her[53], "You ought not t surprised that I want money at the half-year's end, for wl is the man who does not? But whatever you think, never pect that my wants are occasioned by lavish and undistingu ing bounty. Nobody is less obnoxious to that imputation t I; you I am sure are not, who give to me. I know who i luded to in your letter, under the description of a person lives luxuriously at my cost. But you are misinformed. less a pint of ale at meal times be a luxury, there are no luxu in that man's house, I assure you; and I can assure you bes that whatever he has, he has it not by gift of mine; Mrs. Un and I are merely the medium through which the bounty pa not the authors of it. But we administer it conscientiou and as in the sight of God; and are the more scrupulous al it because it is not ours. As to the rest, we help an woman or two, whom the parish would starve, if we did r and there is the sum total of all the eleemosynary profu with which we are chargeable!"

Teedon seems to have been the person of whom Cow speaks, whether Lady Hesketh had him in her mind, or In one communication he tells the schoolmaster that his q terly remittance is ready whenever it may suit him to call it; and in another, that they had received their annual re tance from "the secret benefactor to the indigent." His ceipts from Johnson appear to have come in good time, w Mrs. Unwin had expended no small part of her little cap and his own poor means were diminished. Writing to the fa ful friend who acted as his steward in these concerns, he sa —"Your tidings concerning the slender pittance yet to co are, as you observe, of the melancholy cast. Not being gi by nature with the means of acquiring much, it is well how that she has given me a disposition to be contented with li I have now been so many years habituated to small matt that I should probably find myself incommoded by great and may I but be enabled to shift, as I have been hitherto, satisfied wishes will never trouble me much. My pen has hel me somewhat; and after some years toil I begin to reap benefit. Had I begun sooner, perhaps I should have kn fewer pecuniary distresses:—Or who can say? It is poss that I might not have succeeded so well. Fruit ripens o

[53] June 30. [54] To Mr. Hill, March 29.

a short time before it rots, and man, in general, arrives not at maturity of mental powers at a much earlier period."

His letters had now become short and unfrequent, not from any diminution of regard for his correspondents, nor for want of inclination to what had hitherto been with him a favourite employment, but because of his affectionate attention to Mrs. Unwin. "You will not judge me," he says to Mr. Newton[55], "by the unfrequency of my letters; nor suppose that my thoughts about you are equally unfrequent. In truth they are not. No day passes in which you are excluded from them. I am so busy that I do not expect even now to fill my paper. While I write, my poor invalid, who is still unable to amuse herself either with book or needle, sits silent at my side; which makes me, in all my letters, hasten to a conclusion. My only time for study is now before breakfast, and I lengthen it as much as I can by early rising." He regarded it as a good effect of study, that it made him an early riser, who might otherwise, he said, perhaps be as much given to dozing as his readers. But nothing could have been more injurious for him than to curtail that natural sleep which is the best of all restoratives.

"I know not," he tells Mr. Newton[56], "that with respect to our health, we are either better or worse than when you saw us. Mrs. Unwin perhaps has gained a little strength, and the advancing spring, I hope, will add to it. As to myself, I am in body, soul, and spirit, *semper idem*. Prayer I know is made for me, and sometimes with great enlargement of heart by those who offer it; and in this circumstance consists the only evidence I can find, that God is still favourably mindful of me, and has not cast me off for ever." This was in April. In the June following, he says of Mrs. Unwin[57], "in her I cannot perceive any alteration for the better; and must be satisfied, I believe, as indeed I have great reason to be, if she does not alter for the worse. She uses the orchard-walk daily, but always supported between two, and is still unable to employ herself as formerly. But she is cheerful, seldom in much pain, and has always strong confidence in the mercy and faithfulness of God.

"As to myself, I have always the same song to sing,—Well in body, but sick in spirit: sick, nigh unto death.

[55] April 25. [56] April 25. [57] June 12.

Seasons return, but not to me returns
God, or the sweet approach of heavenly day,
Or sight of cheering truth, or pardon seal'd,
Or joy, or hope, or Jesus' face divine;
But cloud, &c.

I could easily set my complaint to Milton's tone, and accompany him through the whole passage, on the subject of a blindness more deplorable than his; but time fails me."

"You ought," he tells Hayley[58], "to account it an instance of marvellous grace and favour that I condescend to write even to you. Sometimes I am seriously almost crazed with the multiplicity of the matters before me, and the little or no time that I have for them; and sometimes I repose myself, after the fatigue of that distraction, on the pillow of despair; a pillow which has often served me in the time of need, and is become by frequent use, if not very comfortable, at least convenient. So reposed, I laugh at the world, and say, 'Yes, you may gape and expect both Homer and Milton from me, but I'll be hanged if ever you get them."

It was his intention to bring out the second edition of his Homer as soon as possible, for a reason which, he said, any poet may guess, if he will but thrust his hand into his pocket. But he had undertaken the serious task of revising it, with the view of obviating some of the objections which had been made to it. In this he yielded to the opinion of others, in some things against his own judgment. With respect to inversions in particular, which had been said to abound in his translation, and which had been far more frequent in the first copy of his work, most of them having been expunged in deference to Fuseli's criticisms, he consented to remove more, saying, "I know that they give dignity, and am sorry to part with them: but to parody an old proverb, he who lives in the year ninety-three, must do as in the year ninety-three is done by others." So too with inharmonious lines, which were not more in number than he accounted indispensably necessary to a due variation of cadence, "I have, however," he says, "now, in conformity with modern taste, (over-much delicate in my mind,) given to a far greater number of them a flow as smooth as oil. Hereafter they shall not quarrel with me on that score. The Iliad is now all smooth turnpike; and I will take equal care that

[58] March 19.

shall be no jolts in the Odyssey." But the publisher had ssed a wish for notes, "that the unlearned might be a little inated concerning classical story and the mythology of ıncients:" "and his behaviour to me," says Cowper, "has so liberal, that I can refuse him nothing. Poking into the Greek commentators blinds me. But it is no matter; I am ıore like Homer." He breakfasted every morning upon or eight pages of these commentators; for so much he ıbliged to read, in order to select, perhaps, three or four notes. No wonder that he found this a more laborious than the translation, and said that he should be heartily when it was over. It was, indeed, an office which might been just as well performed by deputy, and the time and which it cost him were therefore misemployed.

this he alludes, in a sonnet written upon occasion of ey's having proposed to him some plan of literary coopera-

Dear architect of fine CHATEAUX in air,
  Worthier to stand for ever, if they could,
  Than any built of stone, or yet of wood,
For back of royal elephant to bear;
O for permission from the skies to share,
  Much to my own, though little to thy good,
  With thee (not subject to the jealous mood,)
A partnership of literary ware!
But I am bankrupt now; and doom'd henceforth
  To drudge, in descant dry, on others' lays;
Bards, I acknowledge, of unequall'd worth;
  But what is commentator's happiest praise?
That he has furnish'd lights for other eyes,
Which they, who need them, use, and then despise.

tating to his "dear brother bard," the other impedi- s which could not be comprised within the bounds of a et, he described his own position, and his inability to com- verses unless in solitude. "My poor Mary's infirm con- ı makes it impossible for me, at present, to engage in a such as you propose. My thoughts are not sufficiently nor have I, nor can I, by any means, find opportunity. d to it comes a difficulty, which, though you are not at vare of it, presents itself to me under a most forbidding ırance: can you guess it?—No, not you; neither perhaps ou be able to imagine that such a difficulty can possibly st. If your hair begins to bristle, stroke it down again.

for there is no need why it should erect itself. It concerns me, not you. I know myself too well not to know that I am nobody in verse, unless in a corner, and alone, and unconnected in my operations. This is not owing to want of love for you, my brother, or the most consummate confidence in you; for I have both in a degree that has not been exceeded in the experience of any friend you have, or ever had. But I am so made up—I will not enter into a metaphysical analysis of my strange composition, in order to detect the true cause of this evil; but on a general view of the matter, I suspect that it proceeds from that shyness, which has been my effectual and almost fatal hinderance on many other important occasions: and which I should feel, I well know, on this, to a degree that would perfectly cripple me. No! I shall neither do, nor attempt any thing of consequence more, unless my poor Mary get better; nor even then, unless it should please God to give me another nature, in concert with any man. I could not, even with my own father or brother, were they now alive. Small game must serve me at present; and till I have done with Homer and Milton, a sonnet, or some such matter, must content me. The utmost that I aspire to, and Heaven knows with how feeble a hope! is to write at some better opportunity, and when my hands are free, *The Four Ages*. Thus I have opened my heart unto thee."

Hayley, upon this, devised a scheme which might be carried into effect, connected with his friend's habit of solitary composition. It was that each should write a portion of the Four Ages; and that the poem, thus composed, should form part of a very ample original confederate work, which they hoped to produce in concert with the united powers of some admirable artists, who were justly dear to them both. Romney was, unquestionably, one of those artists; Flaxman, perhaps, the other. Cowper was so pleased with this, that he replied[60], "My dearest Hayley, if the excessive heat of this day, which forbids me to do any thing else, will permit me to scribble to you, I shall rejoice. To do this is a pleasure to me at all times, but to do it now, a double one; because I am in haste to tell you how much I am delighted with your projected quadruple alliance; and to assure you that if it please God to afford me

[60] July 7.

health, spirits, ability, and leisure, I will not fail to devote them all to the production of my quota of *The Four Ages*.

"You are very kind to humour me as you do, and had need be a little touched yourself with all my oddities, that you may know how to administer to mine. All whom I love do so, and I believe it to be impossible to love heartily those who do not. People must not do me good in *their* way, but in my *own*, and then they do me good indeed. My pride, my ambition, and my friendship for you, and the interest I take in my own dear self, will all be consulted and gratified by an arm-in-arm appearance with you in public; and I shall work with more zeal and assiduity at Homer, and when Homer is finished, at Milton, with the prospect of such a coalition before me."

At this time his spirits appeared to be recovering; and he wrote thus to Teedon.

DEAR SIR, Aug. 10, 1793.

You will expect a line from me, and it is fit that you should receive one, though to say the truth it is hardly possible for me to find time to send you one. I have no uncommon grievances to complain of. Since I wrote last, my nights have been as quiet as they ever are at the best, and my spirits in the day-time not worse. I will not therefore devote this paper to a recital of melancholy thoughts and experiences. Two nocturnal ones I have had which I will subjoin and then conclude. In the first place, I dreamed about four nights ago that, walking I know not where, I suddenly found my thoughts drawn towards God, when I looked upward and exclaimed—

"*I love thee even now more than many who see thee daily.*"

Whether the dream was from a good source or not I cannot tell, for it was accompanied with little or no sensation of a spiritual kind.

This morning I had partly in Latin and partly in Greek,—

"*Qui adversus σεθεν stant nihili erunt.*"

I conclude myself in haste, with many thanks for your prayers and kind remembrances, in which we both unite.

Yours sincerely, WM. COWPER.

A memorandum in the schoolmaster's diary refers to this communication. "Aug. 10, 1793. Received a letter from the Esquire of *happier import* than any I ever received on the

whole. The Lord grant it may be his harbinger of deliverance!" But this gleam of sunshine was soon overcast. "*Non sum quod simulo*, my dearest brother," he says to Hayley[61]; "I am cheerful upon paper sometimes, when I am absolutely the most dejected of all creatures. Desirous, however, to gain something myself by my own letters, unprofitable as they may and must be to my friends, I keep melancholy out of them as much as I can, that I may, if possible, by assuming a less gloomy air, deceive myself; and, by feigning with a continuance, improve the fiction into reality."

The next letter to Teedon shows that the hope which he had hitherto placed in that poor man's intercessions and experiences was failing fast. It appears by the commencement as if a certain time had been fixed either by the one or the other, and that it had now expired. "Dear Sir," he says[62], "the time is come about when I feel myself called upon to say something in acknowledgement of the many prayers you make for us, and the many notices you send me. When I have thanked you for them, I have said all on the subject that is worth saying. For neither the prayers are in any degree answered, nor the notices fulfilled. Of course I continue as I was; distressed and full of despair. The day hardly ever comes in which I do not utter a wish that I had never been born. And the night is become so habitually a season of dread to me, that I never lie down on my bed with comfort, and am in this respect a greater sufferer than Job, who, concerning his hours of rest, could hope at least, though he was disappointed. I cannot ever hope on that subject, after twenty years' experience that in my case, to go to sleep is to throw myself into the mouth of my enemy.

"Some time since I took laudanum, and found a little relief from that. Now I take James's powders, and from that I find a little relief also. But what is the relief from such remedies worth? I cannot always take them. After a time they lose their effect, and the effect is trivial while it lasts.

"My pen runs, and I say little to the purpose. Complaints are idle, and only imbitter my spirit more. I will cease, therefore, and add no more than that I remain, sincerely yours,

"WM. COWPER."

Still he exerted himself as much as it was possible for any

[61] Sept. 8. [62] Sept. 13.

on to do in such a state of mind; indeed no other case has
ı recorded of such a continued struggle against insanity.
sought relief in employment, in exercise, in improving his
len and orchard, in the society of those whom he loved,
never it could be obtained,.. and sometimes, it appears,
never his malady did not preclude him from that resource,
rayer. These persevering efforts might perhaps have again
led for a while, as they had formerly done, had it not been
the melancholy spectacle, which was now continually before
, of his dear companion's increasing infirmities of body
of mind. About this time it was that he addressed to her
of the most touching, and certainly the most widely
wn of all his poems, for it has been read by thousands
tens of thousands who have never perused the Task,
perhaps seen, or heard of any other of his works. Hayley
ved it to be the last original piece which he produced at
ton, and says, he questioned whether any language on
ı can exhibit a specimen of verse more exquisitely tender.

TO MARY.

The twentieth year is well nigh past,
Since first our sky was overcast;
Ah would that this might be the last!
My Mary!

Thy spirits have a fainter flow,
I see thee daily weaker grow;
'Twas my distress that brought thee low,
My Mary!

Thy needles, once a shining store,
For my sake restless heretofore,
Now rust disused, and shine no more;
My Mary!

For though thou gladly wouldst fulfil
The same kind office for me still,
Thy sight now seconds not thy will,
My Mary!

But well thou play'dst the housewife's part;
And all thy threads with magic art,
Have wound themselves about this heart,
My Mary!

Thy indistinct expressions seem
Like language utter'd in a dream;
Yet me they charm, whate'er the theme,
My Mary!

Thy silver locks, once auburn bright,
Are still more lovely in my sight
Than golden beams of orient light,
My Mary!

For could I view nor them nor thee,
What sight worth seeing could I see?
The sun would rise in vain for me,
My Mary!

Partakers of thy sad decline,
Thy hands their little force resign;
Yet gently prest, press gently mine,
My Mary!

Such feebleness of limbs thou prov'st,
That now at every step thou mov'st
Upheld by two;—yet still thou lov'st,
My Mary!

And still to love, though prest with ill,
In wintry age to feel no chill,
With me is to be lovely still,
My Mary!

But ah! by constant heed I know,
How oft the sadness that I show,
Transforms thy smiles to looks of woe,
My Mary!

And should my future lot be cast
With much resemblance of the past,
Thy worn-out heart will break at last,
My Mary!

If the society which he loved could have counteracted the cooperating effect of Mrs. Unwin's decline and of his own morbid mind, the latter part of this year might have been the most cheerful autumn that he had passed at Weston. His cousin, of Norfolk, had promised to visit him in October. Hayley was to come and bring with him his son, a boy of extraordinary talents and attainments, of whom Cowper said[63], "If Tom is charmed with the thoughts of coming to Weston, we are equally so with the thoughts of seeing him here. At his years I should hardly hope to make his visit agreeable to him, did I not know that he is of a temper and disposition that must make him happy every where."—"If Romney can come with you," he added, "we have both room to receive him, and hearts to make him most welcome."

[63] Sept. 8.

Romney could not accept the invitation; and before any of his expected guests arrived, Mr. Rose announced his own coming with Laurence. . "you may guess," said Cowper[64], "for what purpose. Yet once more is my patience to be exercised; and once more I am made to wish that my face had been moveable, to put on and take off at pleasure, so as to be portable in a band-box, and sent to the artist." Their presence, however, proved a sensible relief to him. "Having company at the house," he writes to Teedon[65], "I am amused; and having been obliged to take laudanum again to quiet my nerves and spirits, somewhat discomposed by their arrival, I have slept more composedly of late, and accordingly have for some days past suffered less from melancholy than I usually do.

"I have thus given you a short account of my present state of mind, and the reasons and causes that have occasioned it. The time I have for writing is short, and will not allow me to add much. I have however to observe, what I have observed so often, that for these intervals, in which my experience is less painful, I am always indebted to incident, and not to any manifestation of mercy. They are therefore the less valuable, but such as they are I am glad of them, and desire to make the most of them."

And now he again began to think that surely Teedon's constant intercessions would not always be ineffectual. But in the course of a fortnight, he wrote in a more desponding tone[66], saying, "Could I feed on the bread which seems to be intended for me, it is so plentifully imparted to you, that I should feel no want: but I am in the state of Tantalus, surrounded with plenty, and yet famished. If God designed that I should eat, would he not enable me to do so? This is mysterious, and I cannot solve it.—I dream nothing, hear nothing but from enemies; never wake without hearing; but the matter is generally so trivial, if it be not terrible, that it seems spoken only in derision.—In about a month, perhaps in less, I shall begin Milton, and beg your prayers in the meantime on that subject, which always appears formidable to me. I am in a poor condition both of heart and mind to write Evangelical Dissertations. A deaf man treating of music!"—Yet he said he had tolerable spirits, owing, as when he wrote last, to company and laudanum. Hayley arrived after Laurence had departed;

[64] Oct. 5. [65] Oct. 12. [66] Oct. 25.

but he found Johnson there and Rose. Cowper seemed to him,.. to use his own words.. "as well as a very feeling mortal can be, who is watching with affectionate care a life inexpressibly valuable to him, and suspended by a thread so singularly worn, that its duration is wonderful." An invitation had been brought him by Rose from Lord Spencer, to meet Gibbon at Althorpe, and all his friends pressed him to accept it; but even if he could have overcome his constitutional shyness, no consideration would have induced him to leave Mrs. Unwin in her infirm and precarious condition. Rose and Hayley therefore carried his apology for declining the invitation, and Hayley returned from this visit to devote himself to Cowper, he says, when his younger guests were departed.

"When two poets meet," says Cowper[67] in a letter to Mrs. Courtenay at this time, "there are fine doings I can assure you. My Homer finds work for Hayley, and his Life of Milton work for me; so that we are neither of us one moment idle. Poor Mrs. Unwin in the meantime sits quiet in her corner, occasionally laughing at us both, and not seldom interrupting us with some question or remark, for which she is constantly rewarded by me with a 'Hush! hold your peace!' Bless yourself, my dear Catherine, that you are not connected with a poet,—especially that you have not two to deal with. Ladies who have may be bidden indeed to hold their peace, but very little peace have they. How should they in fact have any, continually enjoined as they are to be silent?—I write amid a chaos of interruptions. Hayley on one hand spouts Greek, and on the other hand Mrs. Unwin continues talking, sometimes to us, and sometimes, because we are both too busy to attend her, she holds a dialogue with herself. Query, is not this a bull? and ought I not instead of dialogue to have said soliloquy?"

Hayley says that Cowper entreated him to remain the whole winter at Weston, and engage with him in a regular and complete revisal of his Homer; and that inclination on his part was not wanting, but he thought it possible to render him a more essential service, as he returned through London, by quickening in the minds of his more powerful friends a seasonable attention to his interest. "My fears for him," he says, "in every point of view, were excited by his present very singular

[67] Nov. 4.

[illegible]. He possessed completely at this period all the [illegible] of his mind, and all his native tenderness of [illegible] but there was something indescribable in his appearance, [illegible] had me to apprehend that, without some signal event in his [illegible] to reanimate his spirits, they would gradually sink into [illegible] dejection. The state of his aged infirm companion [illegible] additional ground for increasing solicitude. Her cheer- [illegible] and beneficent spirit could hardly resist her own accumu- [illegible] maladies, so far as to preserve ability sufficient to watch the tender health of him whom she had watched and [illegible] so long. Imbecility of body and mind must gradually [illegible] this tender and heroic woman unfit for the charge [illegible] she had so laudably sustained. The signs of such im- [illegible]ty were beginning to be painfully visible; nor can nature [illegible] a spectacle more truly pitiable than imbecility in such [illegible]pe, eagerly grasping for dominion, which it knows not [illegible] how to retain, or how to relinquish."

[illegible]th this intention Hayley left them towards the close of [illegible]mber, after somewhat more than a fortnight's tarriance. [illegible]er's spirits were immediately afterwards relieved, as re- [illegible]d Milton, by a letter from Johnson, saying, that he [illegible]t still postpone his labours. But in other respects the [illegible] darkened. Telling the schoolmaster that by means of [illegible]num he had obtained more sleep the last two nights, he [illegible] "but neither of these nights has passed without some [illegible]tenings of that which I fear more than any other thing, [illegible]oss of my faithful, long tried, and only intimate. From [illegible] they come I know not, nor is the time precisely men- [illegible]l; but it is always spoken of as near approaching. Mrs. [illegible]n has slept her usual time, about five hours, and is this [illegible]ing as well as usual. As for me, I waked with this line [illegible] Comus:

'The wonted roar is up amid the woods!

[illegible]quently I expect to hear it soon."

[illegible]e more of these melancholy communications, which, [illegible]he last, is without a date, I suppose to have been written [illegible] time;—it is the latest that has been published; and [illegible]d the correspondence with Teedon seems very soon after [illegible] to have ceased. Other illusions it may be inferred had [illegible]d away for a while when this was written, and one fatal [illegible] for the time possessed him wholly

DEAR SIR, Friday morning.

I am not well, but far from being so. I wake almost constantly under the influence of a nervous fever; by which my spirits are affected to such a degree that the oppression is almost insupportable. Since I wrote last I have been plunged in deeps, unvisited I am convinced by any human soul but mine; and though the day in its progress bears away with it some part of this melancholy, I am never cheerful because I can never hope, and am so bounded in my prospects, that to look forward to another year to me seems madness.

In this state of mind how can I write? It is in vain to attempt it. I have neither spirits for it, as I have often said, nor leisure. Yet vain as I know the attempt must prove, I purpose in a few days to renew it.

Mrs. Unwin is as well as when I wrote last, but, like myself, dejected. Dejected both on my account and on her own. Unable to amuse herself either with work or reading, she looks forward to a new day with despondence, weary of it before it begins, and longing for the return of night.

Thus it is with us both. If I endeavour to pray, I get my answer in a double portion of misery. My petitions, therefore, are reduced to three words, and those not very often repeated—"God have mercy!"

Adieu! Yours, WM. COWPER.

"It was a spectacle," says Hayley, "that might awaken compassion in the sternest of human characters, to see the health, the comfort, and the little fortune, of a man so distinguished by intellectual endowments and by moral excellence, perishing most deplorably. A sight so affecting made many friends of Cowper solicitous and importunate that his declining life should be honourably protected by public munificence. Men of all parties agreed, that a pension might be granted to an author of his acknowledged merit with graceful propriety; and we might apply to him, on this topic, the very expressive words which the poet Claudian addresses, on a different occasion, to his favourite hero:

Suffragia vulgi
Jam tibi detulerant, quidquid mox debuit aula.

"It was devoutly to be wished, that the declining spirits of *Cowper* should be speedily animated and sustained by assist-

ance of this nature, because the growing influence of melancholy not only filled him with distressing ideas of his own fortune, but threatened to rob him of the power to make any kind of exertion in his own behalf. His situation and his merits were perfectly understood, humanely felt, and honourably acknowledged by persons, who, while they declared that he ought to receive an immediate public support, seemed to possess both the inclination and the power to ensure it. But such is the difficulty of doing real good, experienced even by the great and powerful, or so apt are statesmen to forget the pressing exigence of meritorious individuals in the distractions of official perplexity, that month after month elapsed, in which the intimate friends of Cowper confidently, yet vainly, expected to see him happily rescued from some of the darkest evils impending over him, by an honourable provision for life.

"Imagination can hardly devise any human condition more truly affecting than the state of the poet at this period. His generous and faithful guardian, Mrs. Unwin, who had preserved him through seasons of the severest calamity, was now, with her faculties and fortune impaired, sinking fast into second childhood. The distress of heart that he felt in beholding the cruel change in a companion so justly dear to him, conspiring with his constitutional melancholy, was gradually undermining the exquisite faculties of his mind. But depressed as he was by these complicated afflictions, Providence was far from deserting this excellent man. His female relation, whose regard he had cultivated as his favourite correspondent, now devoted herself very nobly to the superintendence of a house, whose two interesting inhabitants were rendered, by age and trouble, almost incapable of attending to the ordinary offices of life.

"Those only who have lived with the superannuated and the melancholy, can properly appreciate the value of such magnanimous friendship."

CHAPTER XVIII.

LADY HESKETH AT WESTON. HAYLEY'S THIRD VISIT. COWPER'S REMOVAL TO NORFOLK. LAST YEARS OF HIS LIFE.

When Lady Hesketh had enquired in the autumn at what time her coming would be most convenient, Cowper replied, that

since he despaired of ever having her there in the height of summer, which for her own sake he desired most, the depth of winter would be the most eligible season for him; "for then," said he, "it is that in general I have most need of a cordial, and particularly in the month of January." She came at the close of November, soon after Hayley's departure, and her intention was to remain till February. Knowing as she did the awful change that had taken place in Mrs. Unwin, and the injurious manner in which he was necessarily affected by it, she thought him on her arrival better than she had expected; but in the second week of the month which he always dreaded, his malady returned in full force, and in its worst form.

One of his allusions at this time was that it was his duty to inflict upon himself severe penance for his sins;.. such at least is the tradition which Mackintosh[1] and Mr. Basil Montagu heard at Olney seven years afterwards; and this, if it were so, was a state of comparative happiness to the more abiding character of his madness,.. for in the performance of penance the belief in a consequent remission of sins is implied. Six days he sate "still and silent as death," and took no other food during that time than a small piece of bread dipped in wine and water. After every attempt to rouse him had failed, his medical attendant suggested, as the only remaining hope, that Mrs. Unwin should indirectly invite him to go out with her,.. if she could be induced to do this, for her state of mind now required almost as much management as his. She however perceived the necessity of making the experiment, and observing that it was a fine morning, said she should like to try to walk. Cowper immediately rose, took her by the arm,—and the spell which had fixed him to his chair was broken. This appears to have been the last instance in which her influence over him was exerted for his good.

Towards the end of February his cousin Johnson came from Norfolk, and assisted in attending on him as long as he could be absent from his professional duties. Soon after his departure, Mr. Greatheed thought it necessary to let Hayley know the extent of the evil.

TO WILLIAM HAYLEY, ESQ.

DEAR SIR, Newport Pagnel, April 8, 1794.

Lady Hesketh's correspondence acquainted you with the

[1] *Memoirs of Sir J. Mackintosh*, vol. i. p. 156.

melancholy relapse of our dear friend at Weston; but I am uncertain whether you know, that in the last fortnight he has refused food of every kind, except now and then a very small piece of toasted bread, dipped generally in water, sometimes mixed with a little wine. This, her ladyship informs me, was the case till last Saturday, since when he has eat a little at each family meal. He persists in refusing such medicines as are indispensable to his state of body. In such circumstances, his long continuance in life cannot be expected. How devoutly to be wished is the alleviation of his danger and distress! You, dear Sir, who know so well the worth of our beloved and admired friend, sympathize with his affliction, and deprecate his loss doubtless in no ordinary degree; you have already most effectually expressed and proved the warmth of your friendship. I cannot think that any thing but your society would have been sufficient, during the infirmity under which his mind has long been oppressed, to have supported him against the shock of Mrs. Unwin's paralytic attack. I am certain that nothing else could have prevailed upon him to undertake the journey to Eartham. You have succeeded where his other friends knew they could not, and where they apprehended no one could. How natural, therefore, nay, how reasonable, it is for them to look to you, as most likely to be instrumental, under the blessing of God, for relief in the present distressing and alarming crisis! It is, indeed, scarcely attemptable to ask any person to take such a journey, and involve himself in so melancholy a scene, with an uncertainty of the desired success: increased as the apparent difficulty is, by dear Mr. Cowper's aversion to all company, and by poor Mrs. Unwin's mental and bodily infirmities. On these accounts Lady Hesketh dares not ask it of you, rejoiced as she would be at your arrival. Am not I, dear Sir, a very presumptuous person, who, in the face of all opposition, dare do this? I am emboldened by those two powerful supporters, conscience and experience. Was I at Eartham, I would certainly undertake the labour I presume to recommend, for the bare possibility of restoring Mr. Cowper to himself, to his friends, to the public, and to God.

The man who would have hesitated to obey that summons must have had a harder heart than Hayley. Nothing, he says,

could be more unseasonable to him in point of personal venience; he was even forced to borrow money for the jou Cowper, who used to welcome him so warmly, manifested no pleasure at his arrival; but after a few days, he some received medicine and food from his hand, which he v take from no other person. His presence enabled Lady keth to quit what had now become her charge for a few that she might consult Dr. Willis, who was then in the hi repute for his skill in such cases, and to whom Thurlo kindly written, requesting his attention to his unhapp friend. From his instructions for the regular treatment patient, "Lady Hesketh and I," says Hayley[3], "entertain hopes, embarrassed and thwarted as we perpetually are b bodily and mental infirmities of poor Mrs. Unwin, who b however (thank Heaven!) to show herself more properly ble of those efforts of genuine friendship by which I am t to render the most essential service both to her poor charg to herself."

Thomas Hayley, after their visit to Weston in the prec November, had been placed at a private school near D that he might be for a few months near his father's wife was as fond of him as if he had been her own child. H now sent for to Weston, Cowper having "twice spoken manner that seemed to indicate a wish to see him;" and the boy arrived, Cowper did not shrink from him as h from every one else. But this was all. Nothing coul dispel or even lighten the settled gloom by which he wa pressed. A letter from Lord Spencer arrived at this tin announce that a pension of three hundred pounds was to be granted to him by the King; and he was not in a either to open the letter, or to be informed by Lady He

[2] After stating this in a letter to his wife, he adds, that he was also "to bring Jenny as his attendant, having been recently obliged t poor Mary to London, because she had fallen into a state of minc superior to that of the dear unhappy Cowper, to whom indeed she has compared herself for constitutional melancholy."—*Mem. of T. A. E* p. 83. If Hayley had paid any regard to appearances, he would nc taken either Mary or Jenny for his attendant. But Hayley was a "of incoherent transactions,"..to borrow an appropriate expressio *Angus* M'Diarmid, "Ground Officer on the Earl of Breadalbane's es *Edinample.*"

[3] To Mrs. Hayley, April 25.

of its contents. The pension was rendered payable to Mr. Rose as his trustee.

"The daily sight," says Hayley, "of a being reduced to such deplorable imbecility as now overwhelmed Mrs. Unwin, was itself sufficient to plunge a tender spirit into extreme melancholy; yet to separate two friends, so long accustomed to minister with the purest and most vigilant benevolence to the infirmities of each other, was a measure so pregnant with complicated distraction, that it could not be advised or attempted. It remained only to palliate the sufferings of each in their present most pitiable condition, and to trust in the mercy of that God, who had supported them together through periods of very dark affliction, though not so doubly deplorable as the present.

"I had formerly regarded Weston as a scene that exhibited human nature in a most delightful point of view. I had applauded there no common triumphs of genius and friendship. The contrast that I now contemplated has often led me to repeat (with such feelings as those only who have surveyed a contrast so deplorable can possibly conceive) the following pathetic exclamation in the Samson Agonistes of Milton.

'God of our fathers, what is man?
* * * *
Since such as thou hast solemnly elected,
With gifts and graces eminently adorned;
* * * *
Yet towards these thus dignified thou oft,
Amidst their height of noon,
Changest thy countenance and thy hand, with no regard
Of highest favours past
From thee on them, or them to thee, of service.
* * * *
So deal not with this once thy glorious champion!
What do I beg? How hast thou dealt already!
Behold him in this state calamitous, and turn
His labours, for thou canst, to peaceful end!'"

Though Cowper appeared to derive no comfort from Hayley's presence, nevertheless he manifested extreme unwillingness to let him depart. A few weeks afterward there came a letter from his old friend Mr. Rowley, to congratulate him on his pension, and invite him to Ireland. Lady Hesketh's reply describes his situation faithfully, and explains the circumstances at which Hayley hints.

TO CLOTWORTHY ROWLEY, ESQ., AT OLD COURT, NEAR BRAGSHARD, IRELAND.

SIR, Weston, near Olney, Bucks, May 21, 1794.

Will you permit a person who has not the honour to be known to you, to thank you in the sincerity of a grateful heart, for your late kind and friendly letter to Mr. Cowper? Had that amiable and interesting sufferer been in a situation to receive or answer letters, yours, Sir, dated the fourteenth of this month, would not have fallen into my hands; but though I grieve to give pain to a heart so tender, and so friendly as I am convinced by your letter, Sir, that yours *must* be, yet I feel myself under the cruel necessity of acquainting you that your friend, and my much loved cousin, has laboured ever since the second week in January under so dreadful a dejection of spirits, that he is utterly incapable of attending to anything; nor has he ever opened a letter, or suffered one even to be read *to him*, ever since that time!

Truly as I lament the sufferings of this invaluable creature, I cannot *wonder* at them, as the close attendance he has paid to Mrs. Unwin for the last two years, and his unceasing assiduity to her ever since she had her last attack of the palsy, *must* have overcome spirits less tender and susceptible than those of my unhappy cousin. I should inform you, Sir, that ever since we settled at Weston, which is now about nine years, I have generally paid him an annual *winter* visit, knowing that to be the season when his nerves and spirits are usually most oppressed; the winter before last however, being myself ill at Bath, I was prevented attending him as usual, and knowing he would have other friends with him in the spring of 93, I deferred my visit till the middle of November last, when I came here, intending to stay till February. I found this dear soul on my arrival the *absolute nurse* of this poor lady Mrs. Unwin, who cannot move out of her chair without help, nor walk across the room unless supported by two people; added to this, her voice is almost wholly unintelligible, and as their house was repairing all the summer, he was reduced, poor soul! for many months to have no conversation *but hers!* You must imagine, Sir, that his situation was terrible indeed; and *the more* as he was deprived, by means of this poor lady, of all *his wonted* exercises, both mental and bodily, as she did not

choose he should leave her for a moment, or ever use a pen or a book except when he read *to her*, which is an employment that always, I know, fatigues and hurts him, and which therefore my arrival relieved him from.

I thought him on the whole better than I expected he would have been in *such a situation;* though rather low at times, and often expressing his fears of the month of January, a season that has more than once been fatal to him, but the effects of which I flattered myself might be kept off by the company of a third person, and one to whom he is *kindly partial*, as you may possibly know, Sir, if ever you heard him mention a cousin of the name of *Hesketh:* she it is who has now the honour of writing to you, and of deploring from her inmost heart the unhappy situation of this beloved friend, whom neither the soothings of friendship, nor the exertion of very lively spirits (which the goodness of Providence still indulges *to me*) could shield from the dark and absolute *despair* which has for so many months taken entire possession of his charming mind, and totally obscured that brilliant genius, the exertion of which has so often amused and instructed the world.

You will easily believe, Sir, that all which the most lively interest and affection could think of for his relief, has been done, or attempted to be done; but in all attempts of this sort, I find a terrible hinderance in the person of the poor old lady above mentioned, who really seems to live only to counteract whatever schemes are planned for his benefit, and the recovery of his health and spirits. I have however at last, partly with, and partly without her consent, consulted Doctor Willis on his case, whose character I have long known, and whose brilliant and fortunate success in restoring the health of our beloved sovereign has long made my *loyal* heart his own. Whether even his skill will be able to restore this unhappy man at this distance, I cannot at present say; but earnestly hope it may, as I fear Mrs. Unwin will not consent to his removal there; though from the little I saw of the house, and the manner in which the patients are treated, as well as the liberty they seem to enjoy, I am convinced it would be the *very best place he* could be in, and the one in the which he would be most *likely to be restored,*—the rather, as it would separate him from one who, partly *from the attention which she requires*, and partly

from imbecility of mind, occasioned by her *bodily infirmities*, is certainly the *worst companion* he can have at present.

I have thus, Sir, informed you as accurately as I am able of our melancholy *situation*, and can only hope you will not think I have intruded *too long* upon *your patience*. I should not *certainly* have explained myself with so much *frankness* on this occasion, had I not so often heard my dear unhappy cousin speak of *Mr. Rowley* in the warmest terms of friendship and affection, and had not your letter, Sir, confirmed the kind interest you take in him.

I will now only add, that the late happy and totally unexpected event, has given me as much pleasure as I am capable of receiving at such a time as this; it is, indeed, a double comfort to me, as it seems a sort of omen of his recovery, and I hope I may be allowed to think that God never can have abandoned *him*, whom he has wrought such a *miracle* to preserve! I cannot help calling it a *miracle*, because, though I always entertained the highest opinion of the goodness and tenderness of heart, both of the King and Mr. Pitt, yet I could never have hoped that at *such a time as this*, when the *public affairs* are sufficiently intricate and embarrassed to engage their whole attention, that the claims of private *merit* and private *distress* should have been allowed to have had a share. But—it is so, and I never can be sufficiently thankful to those good friends who have interested themselves in poor Cowper's behalf, and by whose means his Majesty's favour has been shown in a manner so liberal and benevolent to a creature so *deserving*. He is at present quite ignorant of this happy circumstance, and must remain so, till returning health shall enable him to support and to rejoice at an event which gives independence to his declining years. I cannot conclude without observing, that it reflects double honour both on the *sovereign* and the *minister* to confer favours on an *author* at a time *when they knew* he was incapable of making the *usual* returns. I will now only observe that my good wishes for my beloved cousin would be *complete*, could I know he was enjoying the place of a friend in the *charming society* you so well describe, and to which you invite him in a manner so kind and so *cordial*.

I have hardly room to say how much I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant, HARRIET HESKETH.

Dr. Willis, when it had been found that his prescriptions produced no good effect, came to see the patient. It appears to have been his opinion, that more might be hoped from change of air, scene, and circumstances than from any mode of treatment that could be pursued. But how should two persons be induced to concur in any arrangement for this purpose, when imbecility of mind had produced perverseness in the one by whose unreasonable will the other was absolutely governed, and when both were alike insensible to all representations, persuasions, and entreaties! Cowper had been urged to leave home in the preceding summer, while his house was undergoing repairs; and the proposition had not displeased him when it was made. He had promised that his first visit should be to Sir John and Lady Throckmorton at Bucklands; and "had I rambled at all," says he[4], "I was under promise to all my dear mother's kindred to go to Norfolk, and they are dying to see me; but I have told them that die they must, for I cannot go." "How[5] to give satisfaction to all, would puzzle me, had I nothing else to do; and therefore the result will probably be, that we shall find ourselves obliged to go no where, since we cannot go every where."

There is a passage in one of his letters, from which it may be inferred that Lady Hesketh at that time had thought it advisable for him to remove, and settle near his maternal relations: for he says to her[6], "it is in vain that thou counsellest me to leave Weston for Norfolk. Kinder friends than I have here in the Courtenays, I could not find even there; and this is, moreover, of all the earth the spot that delights me most." In the spring of 1795, his cousin Johnson thought that perhaps a summer's residence by the seaside might restore his poor kinsman; could he be removed therefore into Norfolk for a few months, Lady Hesketh would have time for recruiting herself after the fatigue and anxiety of the last eighteen months, and toward the close of the year he hoped the inhabitants of the Lodge might reassemble there in amended health and spirits. When he informed Lady Hesketh of this plan, she desired him not to write till all his own affairs were settled, and till he had got the joint assent—("I fear," said she[7], "I must not say the *cheerful* assent) of all parties. At present you assure me you

[4] To Hayley, March 19, 1793. [5] To Mr. Greatheed, July 17, 1793.
[6] June 30, 1793. [7] May 5.

are really fixed and steady; and I am determined to believe you, and even to do more, to thank you very sincerely for the plan you have laid to convenience me by allowing me so many holidays.—You say that a huge, black, heavy cloud was hanging over you at the time you wrote. Ah, Johnny! I do indeed believe that the cloud that hung over you damped your spirits, and this though possibly the atmosphere was as clear at the time you wrote as it is at this moment; but the cloud that sunk your spirits was the visit you so kindly promised to the Lodge.

"One thing, however," she continues, "*I must desire,* that if you keep up any correspondence in this house, besides me, you will on no account mention or give the most distant hint of your intended visit here, at least not of the *occasion* of it. That you may have thoughts of coming here in the course of the summer, I should not object to their knowing, and have indeed hinted, some time ago, the possibility of such a thing to our cousin, with which he rather seemed pleased; but I wish not that the *family* or *Madame* should suspect it; if she did, she might hit upon some plans that might not be pleasant either to you or me; therefore the less that is said will be the best. You may depend, however, that I will take care they shall both know of your coming; and that you shall not take them by surprise, as last summer, seeing I have now found out our dear cousin likes to be told of whatever he is to expect; and I am sure he will be more glad to see you than any body. But it grieves me to say he is very bad indeed,—scarce eats anything! —is worn to a shadow! and has totally given up all his little avocations, such as netting, putting maps together, playing with the solitary board, &c. &c. with which we contrived to while away the winter more tolerably than I had any reason to expect. He now does nothing but walk *incessantly* backwards and forwards either in his study or his bedchamber. He really does not sometimes sit down for more than half an hour the whole day, except at meal times, when, as I before said, he takes hardly *any thing*. He has left off bathing his feet, will take no laudanum, and lives in a constant state of terror that is dreadful to behold! He is now come to expect daily, and even *hourly*, that he shall be carried away;—and *kept* in his room from the time breakfast was over till four *o'clock* on Sunday last, in spite of repeated messages from

Madame, because he was afraid somebody would take possession of his bed, and prevent his lying down on it any more!

"I mention these things, dear Johnny, not to frighten or grieve you, but simply to show you how bad the dear soul is! I wrote last week to Dr. Willis for the first time since September last, informed him how much better he had seemed all the winter, and how rapidly his malady had increased within these few weeks. I told the doctor, what I do indeed think, that he has *no chance*, either for *health* or *life*, but by passing some time under his care; and though I know no more than I did last year *how* this can be effected, I have yet desired him to inform me whether he has, or shall have in the course of the summer, room for this unhappy, interesting creature under his own roof. The expense of this will, I know, be very great, but I will with pleasure do all in my power to make this easy to him. Of his pension he has not received one farthing, nor is likely to do so before next winter; and Hannah's amazing extravagance has not cost less than one hundred and fifty pounds since last July! What can become of our poor cousin, *sick* or *well*, if she is to go on in this manner I cannot guess. All in my power I have done to put somestop to such shameful proceedings, but in vain: the boarding school has *finished* what Mrs. Unwin's absurd, unpardonable indulgence had begun, and what is to become of her I know not! she literally does nothing but walk about, and dress herself, and write love letters. If you saw her sweep the village with muslin dresses of twelve shillings a yard, and feathers a yard long, you would really think it was some duchess. I have told her that the daughter of a man of five thousand pounds a year would not be allowed to dress as she does; and when one considers that all this finery is to dine in the *kitchen*, it makes one sick. She certainly looks very elegant and showy, and as Mrs. Unwin does not restrain her, I wonder not at the girl. I have found out that once when she was very ill, she engaged Mr. Cowper to take care and provide for her; but how he is to do it I am sure I know not. All he is worth in the world would not half keep Hannah, taking finery and idleness into the account, for she puts out all her clothes and linen to be *mended* as well as *made*. I am sure she is a singular instance of foolish fondness; and now Mrs. Unwin lies in bed till past one, this girl never attends her in her room, or does

the least thing for her in return for all her indulgence!—but I will say no more, as the subject is really painful to

"Yours sincerely, "H. H.

"I understand from Mr. Rose that he expected you in town to christen my godson, his little Cowper. Can I find room to tell you Mrs. Unwin had another attack the seventeenth of last month? It affected her face and voice only. She is a dreadful spectacle; yet within these two days she has made our wretched cousin drag her round the garden; though even Samuel can scarce support her.—You would have a great treat if you were here now, as I am ranging and putting into books letters of our cousin's to me from the year 85 to 93, and often wish for you to help me."

It was not only desirable that the effect of change should be tried for Cowper's sake, but it was also necessary that some effectual steps should be taken for altering an establishment which was conducted with such reckless improvidence while Mrs. Unwin continued nominally at its head. Mr. Johnson, however, when he arrived at the Lodge in July had no intention of proposing a final removal; but he probably contemplated a longer absence for them when he succeeded in the difficult task of persuading Cowper and Mrs. Unwin to return with him, than had originally been intended. "It was a singularly happy circumstance," he says[8], "that in this projected departure from his beloved Weston, neither Cowper, nor Mrs. Unwin, nor either of their friends, thought of anything farther than a temporary absence. For had the measure been suggested under the idea of a final separation from that endeared residence, (which was eventually found to have been the intention of Providence,) the anguish of Cowper in passing for the last time over the threshold of his favourite retirement, and in taking leave of Lady Hesketh for ever, might not only have proved fatal to the delicate health of his affectionate relative, but have so extended itself to the breast of his conductor, as to have deprived him of the necessary fortitude for sustaining so long a journey with so helpless a charge." No definite plan indeed could be formed for two persons who were both in such a state of mind as to render it not improbable that if they began the journey they might insist upon turning

[8] Sketch of the Life of Cowper, p. lvi.

back. But Cowper had a presentiment that he should never return; and on a panel of the window shutter in his bedchamber, unknown to any person at the time, he wrote these lines:

> Farewell, dear scenes, for ever closed to me;
> Oh, for what sorrows must I now exchange ye[9]!

How difficult it was to effect this movement, and how uncertain that it would be effected till the very last, may be understood from a letter which Lady Hesketh began to Mr. Johnson on the evening of the day after their departure.

Weston, Wednesday evening, July 29, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR JOHN,

Here I am, lost in wonder and astonishment at your

[9] I am obliged for these lines, in the first instance, to Mr. Burges; he informed me that a friend of his, who resided in that neighbourhood, and whose father was well acquainted with Cowper, had occasion to visit Weston early in 1833; and going over Cowper's house, to see it *in statu quo*, for the last time, as a farmer who had just taken possession of the place was in the act of painting and whitewashing the rooms, he found them, written in pencil, and immediately recognised the hand-writing.

A subsequent communication from the Rev. Josiah Bull (to whom I have many obligations) authenticates them, and adds the following circumstance, explanatory of the two dates, which are written under the verses, thus:

July 22.
—— 28, 1795.

"The couplet is written on the panel of the window-shutter, and the room overlooked his garden, and commands a partial view of those scenes which were so interesting to him. The lines are the more touching as being singularly prophetic of his unhappy state of mind during the period subsequent to his leaving Weston. That I might obtain an accurate copy of them I rode over to Weston yesterday, and was fortunate enough to meet with a person who gave me some information which verifies their origin, and accounts for their preservation for forty years. This individual, whose name is Price, tells me that he assisted in packing Mr. Cowper's goods, and that he and others saw the lines after he had left. He accounted for the second date by the circumstance that Mr. Cowper did not leave Weston on the day he expected, but not until nearly a week from that time. Price himself afterwards occupied the house, and says that for twenty years that very shutter was closed up to avoid the tax. It seems that it was afterwards opened: but two years ago, when the present occupant came to the house, he found it again closed. This probably accounts for the preservation of the writing. It has been unfortunately retraced, but is evidently the fair and distinct hand of the poet. There is a word before the second date, but I am unable to read it."

matchless generalship, and the uncommonly successful manner in which you carried all your points,—all at least that have come to my knowledge; and as your caravan is not returned to this place, (which I promise you, I expected without ceasing the whole of yesterday,) you certainly keep *going on;* that is undoubted: and our dear, much loved, and most unhappy cousin will actually to-morrow find himself in Norfolk! that El Dorado which the dear soul thought so utterly impossible for him ever to attain. Oh, my good Johnny, what an astonishment did you leave me in, and in what perfect astonishment have I lived ever since!"

Care had been taken that when they reached Bedford a relay of horses should be ready on the skirts of the town, so that they passed through without stopping. "On the evening of the first day," says his kinsman, "the quiet village of St. Neots, near Eaton, afforded as convenient a resting place for the party as could have been desired; and the peaceful moonlight scenery of the spot as Cowper walked with his kinsman up and down the churchyard, had so favourable an effect on his spirits, that he conversed with him with much composure on the subject of Thomson's Seasons, and the circumstances under which they were probably written." Nothing that might be at all compared with "this gleam of cheerfulness with which it pleased God to visit the afflicted poet at the commencement of his journey" was ever again exhibited in his countenance; yet Mr. Johnson says it was a subject of grateful remembrance to him, "for though it vanished from the breast of Cowper, like the dew of the morning, it preserved the sunshine of hope in his own mind as to the final recovery of his revered relation; and that cheering hope never forsook him till the object of his incessant care was sinking into the valley of the shadow of death." St. Neot's churchyard will be visited by many a traveller for Cowper's sake; it was there, and by moonlight, that he saw for the last time the river Ouse.

The same care had been taken to provide horses at Cambridge as at Bedford. They passed the second night at Barton Mills, which being a solitary place was for them a convenient one; and on the third day they reached the village of North Tuddenham, their journey's end. There, "by the kindness of the Rev. Leonard Shelford, they were comfortably accommodated with an untenanted parsonage house, in which they

were received by Miss Johnson and Miss Perowne; the residence of their conductor, in the market place of East Dereham, being thought unfavourable to the tender spirit of Cowper.

Lady Hesketh finished her letter from her house in London, having heard from their "conductor," that they were proceeding well on their journey, and anticipating that it was safely completed.

N. Norfolk Street. Saturday. Ten o'clock. Aug. 1.

The upper part of this letter was written, as you will perceive, my dear delightful General, while I remained at Weston, and while I was filled with anxiety for the success of your wonderful enterprise. That anxiety, blessed be God for it! your welcome letter of yesterday has entirely removed; for I cannot help prognosticating every thing happy and delightful from a journey which has begun so well; so much better indeed than could have been hoped or imagined; though I always was of opinion that nothing on earth was so likely to remove our beloved friend's malady, as change of air, and an entire new scene. Dr. Willis said the same thing last year; but how to bring it about was the question: and I must honestly confess that I never should have had the ingenuity to have planned, or the courage to have executed the scheme you so nobly undertook, and have, I doubt not, by this time, my Johnny, so happily *executed*. But you, my Johnny, could

alone have formed an idea of taking *Madame* as part of your travelling equipage; and but for that, our poor friend would still have remained a miserable captive; nor would she ever have allowed him to have strayed beyond the walls of his prison-house, had not your friendly heart inspired you with the happy idea of making her the partner of his flight. I wonder not to find that even she has received benefit by this expedition.—

I must now tell you that the joyful news contained in your letter agitated my spirits so much that it was with the greatest difficulty I scratched a very few lines to Mrs. Courtenay and Mr. Greatheed, the latter of whom met me when I stopped to change horses at Newport Pagnel, and to whom I gave so bad an account of your dear fellow-traveller, that he, I am sure, will be transported with joy at the blessed account he will receive this day,—as unexpected to him as to myself. And now, my dear Johnny, let me say that you appear evidently to me to be an instrument in the hands of a good Providence, to work out comfort, and to be the means of happiness to our hitherto wretched friend. There is something so completely astonishing in what you have done, and there was so little likelihood that your well concerted plan should yet ever be brought to bear, that I cannot but consider you as being inspired from above to do what you have done. I will only say, that in return, my dear good young friend, there is no good, no blessing, either temporal or spiritual, that I do not wish from my inmost soul may be the portion of you and yours to all eternity.

I cleared out the desk as well as I could, ranged the papers, and put it into your box, together with the Homer, the Miltons, and all the papers that I thought might be useful to our dear cousin. I then had the box *screwed down like a coffin*, lest, as it is heavy, and a lock only in the middle, it might chance to burst. I left ample directions that that box, and the box which contains Miss Johnson's cap, should go by the waggon on Thursday last. The key I have sealed up and given to Susie, who will bring it with her. If our dear cousin should go on as he has begun, I think he will some little time hence be glad to see his old friends, the desk, &c. May it please a gracious Providence to enable him, ere long, to make use of it for his own benefit, and that of the world, prays

Your most obliged and delighted, H. HESKETH.

Be not afraid of wanting money. A quarter of the pension will be paid in a day or two; and you may draw on me, or I will send you a draft for any sum you please; but say not a word to Mrs. U.

These letters show how unhappily Mrs. Unwin's disposition had changed as her mind and body became more and more debilitated; and how necessary it was that some decisive measure should be taken for delivering Cowper from his bondage. The removal was the only course that could have been pursued with any reasonable hope either of present relief, or of eventual recovery. The first object was accomplished by bringing his poor companion into a situation where she was no longer mistress of the establishment, and consequently ceased to expect that every thing should be directed according to her own will. That will had ever been subservient to his, while she was of sound mind; it became selfish only when she could no longer be considered as morally and religiously responsible. And deeply as Cowper was indebted to his kinsman Johnson, during the latter years of his life, he was for nothing more so than for having placed Mrs. Unwin in circumstances where that diseased propensity was effectually checked; where, instead of being regarded by his friends with feelings of displeasure for his sake, she again became to them an object of respect and tenderness, and where he, without utterly sacrificing his health and those pursuits on which that health so greatly depended, could still affectionately discharge the debt of gratitude that he owed her.

As the time of the year was favourable, and Cowper was capable of taking considerable exercise, Mr. Johnson took many walks with him in the retired neighbourhood of Tuddenham. In one of these they reached the house of his cousin, Mrs. Bodham, at Mattishall. At the sight of his own portrait by Abbot, he clasped his hands passionately, and uttered a vehement wish that his feelings were, or could again be, such as they were when that picture was painted.

In August, hoping that both the invalids might derive some benefit from sea air, Mr. Johnson took them to the village of Mundsley[10], on the Norfolk coast. Cowper, in his

[10] "Where, some years ago," says Gibson, in his additions to Camden, "at a cliff were taken up some large bones, (thought to be of a monster,) which were petrified."

better days, had taken great delight in walking on the shore. "I think with you," he says, in a letter to Mr. Unwin[11], "that the most magnificent object under heaven is the great deep; and cannot but feel an unpolite species of astonishment when I consider the multitudes that view it without emotion, and even without reflection. In all its various forms, it is an object of all others the most suited to affect us with lasting impressions of the aweful Power that created and controls it. I am the less inclined to think this negligence excusable, because, at a time of life, when I gave as little attention to religious subjects as almost any man, I yet remember that the waves could preach to me, and that, in the midst of dissipation, I had an ear to hear them. One of Shakespeare's characters says, 'I am never merry when I hear sweet music.' The same effect that harmony seems to have had upon him, I have experienced from the sight and sound of the ocean, which have often composed my thoughts into a melancholy, not unpleasing, nor without its use."

Mundsley was a place at which Cowper had been in his youth, when he visited his maternal relations. The pleasure which he had then felt never could return; but to the solemn effect which the waves produced he was still able to surrender himself; and they had not been there long before Mr. Johnson perceived that there was something inexpressibly soothing to Cowper in the monotonous sound of the breakers; and this, he says, "induced him to confine the walks of the poet, whom dejection precluded from the exercise of all choice whatever, or at least the expression of it, almost wholly to the sands, which at Mundsley are remarkably firm and level."

From this place Cowper began the last series of his letters to Lady Hesketh. They begin gloomily, and grow darker and darker to their close.

TO LADY HESKETH, CHELTENHAM, GLOCESTERSHIRE.

Mundesley, near North Walsham, Aug. 27, 1795.

Hopeless as ever, and chiefly to gratify myself by once more setting pen to paper, I address a very few lines to one whom it would be a comfort to me to gratify as much by sending them. The most forlorn of beings I tread a shore under the burthen of infinite despair, that I once trod all cheerfulness

[11] Sept. 26, 1781.

and joy. I view every vessel that approaches the coast with an eye of jealousy and fear, lest it arrive with a commission to seize me. But my insensibility, which you say is a mystery to you, because it seems incompatible with such fear, has the effect of courage, and enables me to go forth, as if on purpose to place myself in the way of danger. The cliff is here of a height that it is terrible to look down from; and yesterday evening, by moonlight, I passed sometimes within a foot of the edge of it, from which to have fallen would probably have been to be dashed in pieces. But though to have been dashed in pieces would perhaps have been best for me, I shrunk from the precipice, and am waiting to be dashed in pieces by other means. At two miles distance on the coast is a solitary pillar of rock, that the crumbling cliff has left at the high water-mark. I have visited it twice, and have found it an emblem of myself. Torn from my natural connexions, I stand alone and expect the storm that shall displace me.

I have no expectation that I shall ever see you more, though Samuel assures me that I shall visit Weston again, and that you will meet me there. My terrors, when I left it, would not permit me to say—Farewell for ever—which now I do; wishing, but vainly wishing to see you yet once more, and equally wishing that I could now as confidently, and as warmly as once I could, subscribe myself affectionately yours; but every feeling that would warrant the doing it, has, as you too well know, long since forsaken the bosom of W. C.

Mr. Johnson is gone to North Walsham, and knows not that I write.

Mrs. Unwin sends her affectionate respects and compliments.

Soon afterwards he wrote the following letter to Mr. Buchanan. "It shows," says Hayley, "the severity of his depression; but shows also that faint gleams of pleasure could occasionally break through the settled darkness of melancholy." He began with a quotation.

"To interpose a little ease,
Let my frail thoughts dally with false surmise."

"I will forget for a moment, that to whomsoever I may address myself, a letter from me can no otherwise be welcome, than as a curiosity. To you, Sir, I address this; urged to it by extreme penury of employment, and the desire I feel to

learn something of what is doing, and has been done at Weston (my beloved Weston!) since I left it.

"The coldness of these blasts, even in the hottest days, has been such, that added to the irritation of the salt spray, with which they are always charged, they have occasioned me an inflammation in the eyelids, which threatened a few days since to confine me entirely; but by absenting myself as much as possible from the beach, and guarding my face with an umbrella, that inconvenience is in some degree abated. My chamber commands a very near view of the ocean, and the ships at high water approach the coast so closely, that a man furnished with better eyes than mine might, I doubt not, discern the sailors from the window. No situation, at least when the weather is clear and bright, can be pleasanter; which you will easily credit, when I add that it imparts something a little resembling pleasure even to me.—Gratify me with news from Weston! If Mr. Gregson, and your neighbours the Courtenays are there, mention me to them in such terms as you see good. Tell me if my poor birds are living? I never see the herbs I used to give them without a recollection of them, and sometimes are ready to gather them, forgetting that I am not at home. Pardon this intrusion!

"Mrs. Unwin continues much as usual.

"Mundsley, Sept. 5, 1795."

Mr. Johnson's hopes were "greatly elevated by the unexpected dispatch of this epistle, which he hailed, he says, as the forerunner of many more, each contributing something to the alleviation of his melancholy." It appears therefore that Cowper had not informed him of his having written to Lady Hesketh; and indeed the next letter[12] to his cousin implies that, with a feeling common to persons in his state, he thought fit to write to her secretly, and supposed himself to be no longer master of his own actions.

TO LADY HESKETH, CHELTENHAM.

Mr. Johnson is again absent; gone to Mattishall, a circumstance to which I am indebted for an opportunity to answer your letter as soon almost as I have received it. Were he present, I feel that I could not do it.—You say it gives you

[12] The letter is without date, but marked by Lady Hesketh as the second *of the series.*

re to hear from me, and I resolve to forget for a mo-
my conviction that it is impossible for me to give pleasure
y body. You have heard much from my lips that I am
as given you none; if what comes from my pen be less
ıtable, none has therefore so strong a claim to it as
elf.

walks on the sea-shore have been paid for by swelled
ıflamed eyelids, and I now recollect that such was always
ndition of mine in the same situation. A natural effect
ose, at least upon eyelids so subject to disorder as mine,
salt spray and cold winds, which on the coast are hardly
ess than violent. I now therefore abandon my favourite
and wander in lanes and under hedges. As heavy a
I have paid for a long journey, performed on foot to a
called Hazeborough. That day was indeed a day spent
lking, I was much averse to the journey, both on ac-
of the distance and the uncertainty of what I should find
; but Mr. Johnson insisted. We set out accordingly, and
almost ready to sink with fatigue long before we reached
ace of our destination. The only inn was full of com-
but my companion having an opportunity to borrow a
ıg for an hour or two, he did so, and thither we retired.
earned on enquiry, that the place is eight miles distant
this, and though, by the help of a guide, we shortened it
a mile in our return, the length of the way occasioned
fever, which I have had now these four days, and per-
shall not be rid of in four more; perhaps never. Mr.
l Samuel, after dinner, visited the light-house. A grati-
n which would have been none to me for several reasons,
pecially because I found no need to add to the number of
I had to take before I should find myself at home again.
ned however from them that it is a curious structure. The
ng is circular, but the stairs are not so, flight above
, with a commodious landing at every twentieth stair, they
d to the height of four stories; and there is a spacious
andsome apartment at every landing. The light is given
e patent lamp, of which there are two ranges: six lamps
e upper range, and five in the lower; both ranges, as
ıay suppose, at the top of the house. Each lamp has a
silver reflector behind it. The present occupant was
commander of a large merchant-man, but, having chas-

tised a boy of his crew with too much severity, was displaced and consequently ruined. He had, however, a friend in the Trinity-House, who, soon after this was built, asked him if he would accept the charge of it; and the cashiered captain, judging it better to be such a lamp-lighter than to starve, very readily and very wisely closed with the offer. He has only the trouble of scouring the silver plates every day, and of rising every night at twelve to trim the lamps, for which he has a competent salary (Samuel forgets the amount of it,) and he and his family a pleasant and comfortable abode.

I have said as little of myself as I could, that my letter might be more worth the postage. My next will perhaps be less worth it, should any next ensue; for I meet with little variety, and shall not be very willing to travel fifteen miles on foot again, to find it. I have seen no fish since I came here, except a dead sprat upon the sands, and one piece of cod, from Norwich, too stale to be eaten. Adieu. W. C.

Mr. Johnson had found, that, "shattered as Cowper's frame was, and reduced even to a consumptive thinness, it yet retained a considerable portion of muscular strength." When they had explored all the walks within reach of Mundsley, they made a journey of fifty miles, by way of Cromer, Holt, and Fakenham, to look at Dunham Lodge, a house then vacant, standing on high ground in the neighbourhood of Swaffham. Cowper observed that it was rather too spacious for his requirements; but Mr. Johnson thought that he did not seem unwilling to inhabit it, and as he thought also that the situation would be more suitable for him than his own house in the market place at East Dereham, he determined to treat for it. They returned by a different route to Mundsley, "the health, if not the spirits, of Cowper having been benefitted by this journey, though Mrs. Unwin's infirmities continued the same." Mr. Johnson was probably absent in preparing for their removal to Dunham Lodge, when Cowper, who at this time communicated none of his wishes here, supposed him to be gone, whither he himself would fain have returned, to Weston. That feeling he expressed with bitter sorrow to Lady Hesketh.

TO LADY HESKETH, CHELTENHAM.

Mundesly, Sept. 26, 1795.

Mr. Johnson is gone forth again, and again, for the last

ne I suppose that I shall ever do it, I address a line to you. knew not of his intentions to leave me till the day before ; did so. Like every thing else that constitutes my wretched t, this departure of his was sudden, and shocked me accordgly. He enjoined me before he went, if I wrote at all in s absence, to write to Mr. Newton. But I cannot, and so I ld him. Whither he is gone I know not; at least I know ot by information from himself. Samuel tells me that he inks his destination is to Weston. But why to Weston is imaginable to me. I shall never see Weston more. I have en tossed like a ball into a far country, from which there is rebound for me. There indeed I lived a life of infinite spair, and such is my life in Norfolk. Such indeed it would in any given spot upon the face of the globe; but to have ssed the little time that remained to me there, was the sire of my heart. My heart's desire however has been always istrated in every thing that it ever settled on, and by means at have made my disappointments inevitable. When I left eston I despaired of reaching Norfolk, and now that I have ached Norfolk, I am equally hopeless of ever reaching eston more. What a lot is mine! Why was existence given a creature that might possibly, and would probably become etched in the degree that I have been so? and whom misery ch as mine, was almost sure to overwhelm in a moment. it the question is vain. I existed by a decree from which ere was no appeal, and on terms the most tremendous, because known to, and even unsuspected by me; difficult to be mplied with had they been foreknown, and unforeknown, imacticable. Of this truth I have no witness but my own exrience; a witness, whose testimony will not be admitted. it farewell to a subject with which I can only weary you, and ot the paper to no purpose.

You assure me that I shall see you again; tell me where and hen, I shall see you, and I will believe you if it be possible.

Samuel desires me to present his duty to you. His wife is me to Weston, and he wishes me to say that if Mrs. Herbert s any concerns there that Nanny can settle for her, and will ve her the necessary directions, she may depend upon their ing exactly attended to. With Mrs. Unwin's respects, I reain the forlorn and miserable being I was when I wrote last.

W. C.

In the course of October, Mr. Johnson removed his charg
DUNHAM LODGE, as their settled residence. He had ho

that Cowper's letter to Mr. Buchanan might be the means
engaging him in a correspondence, and thus gradually lead h
to resume those employments which heretofore had alw
seemed to suspend his malady. But though Mr. Buchan
in his reply, endeavoured to invite this, it was without succe
As winter approached, walking it is said was rendered i
practicable, probably because, while his eyes were affected,
cold winds of Norfolk confined him to the house as much
the miry ways about Olney had done in former years.
would neither write nor read at any time; but he was willing
listen as long as his kinsman would read to him. The o
books, however, which appeared to interest him, were "wo
of fiction;" and "so happy," says Mr. Johnson, "was the
fluence of these in riveting his attention, that he discove
peculiar satisfaction, when any one of more than ordin
length was introduced." As soon as this was percei
Richardson's novels were procured; and he heard them w
more pleasure because he had been personally acquainted w
the author; perhaps too, because there may be more satis
tion, in reperusing a good book after an interval of m
years, than is felt in reading it for the first time.

Mr. Johnson thought that these readings abstracted Cow

the contemplation of his own misery: and this effect ıt be produced in a considerable degree, even if he were tally incapable of listening with any continuous attention, : described himself in his next letter to Lady Hesketh.

TO THE LADY HESKETH, BATH.

Jan. 22, 1796.

little thought ever to have addressed you by letter more. I become daily and hourly worse, ever since I left Mundsley: : I had something like a gleam of hope allowed me, that ibly my life might be granted me for a longer time than I been used to suppose, though only on the dreadful terms ccumulating future misery on myself, and for no other ın; but even that hope has long since forsaken me, and I consider this letter as the warrant of my own dreadful end; e fulfilment of a word heard in better days, at least six and ty years ago. A word which to have understood at the when it reached me, would have been, at least might have , a happiness indeed to me; but my cruel destiny denied he privilege of understanding any thing that, in the horri- ıoment that came winged with my immediate destruction, ıt have served to aid me. You know my story far better I am able to relate it. Infinite despair is a sad prompter. ɔect that in six days' time, at the latest, I shall no longer ee, but feel the accomplishment of all my fears. Oh, lot nexampled misery incurred in a moment! Oh wretch! to n death and life are alike impossible! Most miserable at ɜnt in this, that being thus miserable I have my senses inued to me, only that I may look forward to the worst. certain, at least, that I have them for no other purpose, but very imperfectly even for this. My thoughts are like : and dry sand, which the closer it is grasped slips the er away. Mr. Johnson reads to me, but I lose every other ɜnce through the inevitable wanderings of my mind, and rience, as I have these two years, the same shattered mode ıinking on every subject, and on all occasions. If I seem rite with more connexion, it is only because the gaps do ıppear.

lieu.—I shall not be here to receive your answer, neither I ever see you more. Such is the expectation of the most erate and most miserable of all beings. W. C.

In this miserable letter he alludes to his old illusion of audible revelations, and to a notion which possessed him now, that he should never die, but was speedily to be carried away in the body to some place of torment. I have already observed that such notions as the latter, affect the insane person who expresses them no more than if he were in a dream, probably not so much. The former was not an "unreal mockery;" the words which occurred to him on waking, though but his own imaginations, were organically heard, and Mr. Johnson perceiving how fully he was impressed with a belief in their reality, ventured upon a questionable experiment. He introduced a tube into his chamber, near the bed's head, and employed one with whose voice Cowper was not acquainted, to speak words of comfort through this conveyance. The hazardous artifice was never discovered, and is not likely to have had any more effect than had been produced by Teedon's communications. It may be surmised from the following letter, that it was attempted by this means to encourage him to resume his employments.

TO THE LADY HESKETH, BATH.

February 19, 1796.

Could I address you as I used to do, with what delight should I begin this letter! But that delight, and every other sensation of the kind, has long since forsaken me for ever. The consequence is, that I neither know for what cause I write, nor of what materials to compose what shall be written; my groans, could they be expressed here, would presently fill the paper. I write, however, at the instance of Mr. Johnson, and, as I always think, so always on the last occasion more assuredly than on any of the former, for the very last time. He, I know, enquired in a letter he lately sent you, when we might expect you here. Whatever day you name in your reply, will be a day that I shall never see: nor have I even the hope, unless it come to-morrow, that your reply itself will reach this place before I am taken from it. The uncertainty is dreadful, and all remedy for it impracticable. But why tell you what I think of myself, of my present condition, and of the means employed to reduce me to it? My thoughts on all these subjects are too well known to you to need any recital here. All my themes of misery may be summed in one word, He who made me, regrets that ever he did. Many years have passed since I learned

is terrible truth from Himself, and the interval has been ent accordingly. Adieu—I shall write to you no more. I n promised months of continuance here, and should be somehat less a wretch in my present feelings, could I credit the omise, but effectual care is taken that I shall not. The night ntradicts the day, and I go down the torrent of time into e gulf that I have expected to plunge into so long. A few urs remain, but among those few not one is found, a part which I shall ever employ in writing to you again. Once ore therefore adieu—and adieu to the pen for ever. I supess a thousand agonies to add only W. C.

Mr. Johnson says he shall expect me to resume the pen d my former employments on Tuesday se'nnight. But hat I have written here, on my reperusal of it, convinces me, it may him, that it will be in vain. Some other dreadful ing will happen to me, and not the desirable one announced.

Lady Hesketh alludes to this letter when writing to Mr. hnson[13]. "It grieves me," says she, "to find our beloved iend is still so miserable in his mind, and so full of those eadful apprehensions. But still I cannot think you did rong to fix a day for his beginning his old occupations again. think it the less, because in the dear soul's last letter to me, says that you have told him that on *such a day* he shall so, but that he is convinced it will be vain, and that instead that something dreadful will take place and prevent it. I ean to write to this dear creature by this post, if I can, and ill then remind him, as I have often done before, that the riod he dreaded with so little reason is past; and if you was good as your word, and did really put his books and papers fore him, on the day you promised, it would serve, I should pe, to show him that *you* have kept your word, and that s abominable whisperers never do; by which the unhappy an may possibly be brought to think that which is most true, at *they never will.*"

"At this time," says Mr. Johnson, "the tender spirit of owper clung exceedingly to those about him, and seemed to be unted with a continual dread that they would leave him alone his solitary mansion. Sunday, therefore, was a day of more an ordinary apprehension to him, as the furthest of his kins-

[13] March 13, 1796.

man's churches being fifteen miles from the Lodge, he was necessarily absent during the whole of the sabbath. On these occasions it was the constant practice of the dejected poet to listen frequently on the steps of the hall door for the barking of dogs at a farm-house, which, in the stillness of the night, though at nearly the distance of two miles, invariably announced the approach of his companion."

Dunham Lodge being thus found, (as might have been foreseen,) an inconvenient place of abode, Mr. Johnson looked out for a house equally retired, but nearer the scene of his ministerial duties. The enquiry was unsuccessful, he then ventured to ask Cowper whether he should object to reside in Dereham, and to his surprise it appeared that "he not only preferred it to his present situation, but if the question had been put to him in the first instance, would never have wished to reside any where else." It was agreed, therefore, that they should remain where they were only till they went to Mundsley for the summer, and that when they left the coast, they should establish themselves at Dereham.

Meantime the weary hours of hopeless inactivity were beguiled by taking him out when the weather permitted, either to walk, or in an open carriage, and by reading novels, to which he seemed to listen with increased interest. In April, Mr. and Mrs. Powley came from Yorkshire to see Mrs. Unwin once more; deplorably indeed was she changed since their last visit to Weston; they came to share for a little while "the tender and even filial attention" which Cowper had never ceased to pay her, and Mr. Johnson says "it could not but be a gratifying spectacle for them to see how assiduously he watched over her, even in his darkest seasons of depression." Mr. Powley read a chapter in the Bible to her every morning before she rose; after his departure Mr. Johnson continued this custom, and as Cowper always visited Mrs. Unwin's chamber the moment he had finished his breakfast, he tried the effect of reading it at that time. "It was a pleasing discovery," he says, "to find that immersed as his unhappy kinsman was in the depths of despondence, all the billows of which had gone over his soul, he could yet listen with composure to the voice of inspiration, of which he had been conceived to be unwilling to hear even the name." Encouraged by this experiment, Mr. Johnson "ventured in the course of a few days to let the

members of his family meet for prayers in the room where Cowper was, instead of assembling in another apartment, as they had hitherto done, under the influence, as it proved, of a misconception with regard to his ability to attend the service. On the first occurrence of this new arrangement, of which no intimation had been previously given him, he was preparing to leave the room, but was prevailed on by a word of soothing and whispered entreaty to resume his seat[14]."

Some change for the better had taken place in his bodily health; from which Hayley, who looked upon the tidings which he received at this time from Norfolk as "good in a very delightful degree[15]," augured a speedy restoration, "not only of the tranquillity, but even of the splendour of his mind. God grant," said he, "that he may soon smile upon us all, like the sun new risen! But I have a strong persuasion on that subject, and feel convinced myself, (I know not how,) that the good old lady's flight to heaven will prove the precursor of his perfect mental recovery." Those hopes were greatly raised soon afterwards, when, by a fortunate incident, he was led to employ himself once more.

Gilbert Wakefield's edition of Pope's Homer had been recently published. Mr. Johnson observed in Cowper's hearing, that in some places the two translations were compared in it, and he laid the eleven volumes in a large unfrequented room, in which Cowper used to take a few melancholy turns by himself every morning in his way back from Mrs. Unwin's apartment to the parlour. The next day it was found that he had looked for these, and had made some corrections in his own version in consequence. This reviving interest in what so long had been his favourite occupation was dexterously encouraged by his kinsman, till he saw him sedulously engaged in revising the whole work. Cowper set about this with such spirits, that he said he had never known till then how Homer ought to be translated;.. a speech which might have been thought to imply more failure of judgment than return of sanity. It was, however, reported to Hayley with delight, and heard by him with exultation; and he was pressed to visit his poor friend now, when his presence seemed likely to accelerate the happy change which had begun. But Hayley had other engagements at this time, which he would have postponed if he had

[14] Sketch, lxvi, lxvii. [15] To Mr. Johnson, May 6, 1796.

apprehended that it might never afterwards be in his power to undertake the journey with any reasonable expectations of being joyfully received.

Eagerly as Cowper had resumed his employment, their removal to the coast in the ensuing month unsettled him; he discontinued it immediately, and derived no benefit from sea air and exercise, so that they left Mundsley with darker prospects than when they went there. And now they took up their abode at East Dereham, a town nearly in the centre of Norfolk, and containing at that time about two thousand five hundred inhabitants.

In the seventh century, Withburga, daughter of the East Anglian king Anna, (who was famous for the number of his canonized children) removed from Holkham to an oratory which she had built for herself and her maidens at this place, then only a village, and called Derrega. Here she gave herself entirely to contemplation, living what her biographers call an angelical life. Now it happened, says the legend, that she and her innocent family of virgins, her attendants, being solicitous to feed their minds with spiritual delicacies, fell into want of necessary sustenance; whereupon the holy virgin, careful of her companions, addressed her prayers to her heavenly Master, whose care extends even to the fowls of the air, and besought him to provide for his handmaids who attended only on his service. Forthwith she fell into a slumber, and in her dream the Queen of Virgins appeared to her, "adorned with inexpressible majesty and beauty," and telling her to take no thought for the morrow, bade her send two of her maidens every morning to the bridge, where two milch deer should meet them, and supply nourishment sufficient for that small family. This continued a long time, till a man of principal authority in the village, deriding the miracle, and instigated by the Devil, took bow and arrows and killed both the deer. "But he that despised miracles, was presently smitten with the jaundice, consumed away, and miserably died." It is not to be supposed that Withburga, a king's daughter, and a future saint, would be left destitute with her maidens. The estate belonged to her father, she laid the foundation there of a large church and nunnery, which she did not live to finish; and dying in the year 743, she was buried in the churchyard. Fifty-five years *afterwards* it was thought becoming that her remains should

be translated into the church of her own foundation, and it then appeared that the Lord had been pleased not only to beatify her spirit with immortality, but her chaste body likewise with incorruption; and not her body only, but her vestments also, were found as fresh as if she had been laid that day in the tomb. Moreover there issued from the grave a copious spring of most pure water, which had virtue to confer health on many persons afflicted with divers diseases. "It is to this day," says Alban Butler, "called Saint Withburg's well; was formerly very famous, and is paved, covered, and enclosed: a stream from it forms another small well without in the churchyard."

Here St. Withburga was venerated with especial honours for several generations, till King Edgar annexed Dereham to Ely Monastery, and gave moreover to that favoured establishment the chief treasure of Dereham, to wit, the body of the saint. The people of the place resisted, and the monks of Ely would not have got possession of their treasure, if they had not stolen it by night; and when they embarked it on the Mere, which it was necessary to cross when Ely was an island, they were in such haste to escape from the close pursuit of the Dereham men, that they must have been lost, if a pillar of fire had not miraculously guided them in safety to the shore. So the still uncorrupted body was deposited at Ely, beside that of her more celebrated sister, St. Etheldreda, otherwise St. Audrey; and its subsequent adventures belong to the history of that cathedral.

Dereham Church is a handsome structure, of great antiquity, in the collegiate form, with a tower in the centre. That tower being pronounced in Henry the Seventh's reign not sufficiently strong to bear the bells, a belfry, called the new clocker, was erected about twenty yards from the chancel, on the south side of the churchyard. Bonner, of abominable memory, was once rector of this church. It is remarkable for many remains of antiquity; and, unless we should in some stage of national insanity imitate the French in their foolery, and translate authors from their graves, as saints were formerly translated, it will be visited hereafter by travellers for Cowper's sake.

It was towards the end of October that Mr. Johnson brought his helpless charge from the sea-coast to his own house at Dereham, and there, on the 17th of December, Mrs. Unwin expired.

without the slightest struggle or appearance of pain. Cowper, though he had never hitherto appeared to notice it, was aware that her dissolution was expected; and when the servant opened his window on the morning of the day of her death, he said to her, "Sally, is there life above stairs?"—He went to her bedside that morning as usual; and when he returned to the room below, Mr. Johnson, at his desire, immediately began to read to him, which his kinsman, though he had not been desired, would have done, because it was generally found to compose him. The book was Miss Burney's Camilla. He had read but a few pages before he was beckoned out of the room to be informed that all was over; and when he returned Cowper did not question him why he had been called out. From this circumstance, and from his countenance, with every turn of which (in his own words) he had been long familiar, he apprehended that Cowper was perhaps in as fit a state to be informed of the event as he ever could be; sitting down therefore to the book, and turning over the leaves to resume his reading, he told him that his poor old friend had breathed her last. He heard this, "though not entirely without emotion, yet with no more than was compatible," says Mr. Johnson, "with his being read to by his kinsman, who had soon the satisfaction of seeing him as composed as before."

This however was no sane composure. A few hours after Mrs. Unwin had breathed her last, he said he was sure that she was not actually dead, but would come to life again in the grave, and then undergo the horrors of suffocation on his account, for he was the occasion of all that she or any other creature upon earth ever did or could suffer. He then seemed to wish to see her. Mr. Johnson accompanied him to the room; at first he fancied that he saw her stir,.. but having looked about a moment at her countenance, changed now from what it was when he had seen it in the morning, and settled into the placidity of death,.. he flung himself to the other side of the room with a passionate expression of feeling,.. the first that he had uttered, or that had been perceived in him since the last return of his malady at Weston. But the effect for the time was what his kinsman had desired. He became wonderfully calm; as soon as they got down stairs he asked for a glass of wine, and from that time he never mentioned her name nor spoke of her again.

It was not known whether her own wish would have been to be buried with her fathers at Ely, or with her husband at Huntingdon. Mr. and Mrs. Powley decided that she should be interred where she had died, and they came from Yorkshire to the funéral. The time appointed was concealed from Cowper, that he might be spared the agitation which it was likely to produce, and the ceremony therefore was performed at night by torch-light.

Hayley was full of hope that a favourable change would be produced in Cowper by Mrs. Unwin's long-desired release. "I have not ceased," said he to Mr. Johnson, "to pray fervently for his restoration, both in prose and rhyme." His devotional feelings, indeed, frequently clothed themselves in verse; and on this occasion he sent to East Dereham a sonnet, which, he says, darted into his head as he reclined on the pillow.

Eternal Fountain of all mental power!
In nightly prayer before thy throne I bend;
Hear thy grieved servant, praying for his friend!
For him, on whom, in health's propitious hour,
It seem'd, dread Sire, thy gracious joy to shower
All that to life can worth and lustre lend;
Feelings all truth, and fancy without end,
With probity, the soul's sublimest dower.
Lord of all beings, and by all adored,
If evil spirits his good angel cross'd,
O dissipate a darkness so deplored!
Let friendship see him to himself restored,
To sink no more in frenzy's hideous frost,
That petrifies the heart, when reason's lost.

The early part of the year was passed by Cowper in the same state of utter dejection; the only relief which he seemed to experience was in listening to works of fiction; these still retained their charm. But when his mind reverted to its own dreams, nothing could be more appalling than the imaginations which possessed him. Lady Hesketh had remarked that his former letters from Dereham, distressing as they were, were written in his usual free and distinct hand; in the only one which he wrote to her this year the character of the writing was changed; it was equally or even more distinct, but much smaller, and every letter appears to have been separately formed. It contained only these few lines[16], undated and unsigned:

[16] The post-mark is May 15, 97.

"To you once more, and too well I know why, I am under cruel necessity of writing. Every line that I have ever sent you, I have believed, under the influence of infinite despair, the last that I should ever send. This I know to be so. Whatever be your condition either now or hereafter it is heavenly compared with mine even at this moment. It is unnecessary to add that this comes from the most miserable of beings, whom a terrible minute made such."

As the spring advanced he was persuaded to resume his walks. The house at Dereham was not found less suitable for him because it fronted the market-place, which was also the high road; that circumstance was by no means displeasing to him; and there was a way into the fields without entering the street. Thus also he could get to an open carriage, for an airing before breakfast, which he was enabled to bear for a few weeks, "owing," Mr. Johnson says, "to the good effect of ass's milk upon his bodily health. This," he adds, "was undoubtedly the period of his last deplorable affliction when the person of Cowper made the nearest approaches to the appearance it had exhibited before his illness. His countenance, from having been extremely thin and of a yellowish hue, had recovered much of its former fulness and ruddy complexion. His limbs were also less emaciated, and his posture more erect; but the oppression on his spirits remained the same. Under these circumstances it was thought advisable to omit the visit to Mundsley this year, and take the utmost advantage of the rides about Dereham."

Eartham had become too expensive an abode for Hayley. Upon declining an invitation to visit his unhappy friend in Norfolk, he says to Mr. Johnson, "I have boldly plunged into brick and mortar, and, with the prudence of a poet, began to build, as the first step in a plan of economy. To explain this riddle, I must inform you, that as I find the sea essential to my health, and to that of the dear sculptor,.. (his son,)—I am building a little marine hermitage, in our favourite village of Felpham. I mean to reside in it seven or eight months in the year, letting this lovely spot as a summer residence to some friends, in whom I can confide for a proper care of my books and pictures; the only treasures I am anxious about. It has occurred to me, that it might be possible for us to render this *place conducive* to our dear Cowper's recovery, and to the re-

establishment of Lady Hesketh's health, if you all pitched your tents on this salutary and pleasant hill, during the finer parts of the year, retreating to Dereham in the winter. Meditate on this friendly hint, my dear Johnny, which I have also suggested to Lady Hesketh. We may all think of it at our leisure, as my new building will not be habitable till next summer; but it is pleasant to form even distant projects on the basis of benevolence and friendship."

In the adjustment of such a plan, he should exult, he said, rather to sacrifice than promote his own pecuniary interest. But upon proposing it to Lady Hesketh he found that she thought Clifton suited her better than any other place would do; "and I imagine," he says, "from the expressions of her letter that she does not intend to reassume any share in the domestic superintendence of our beloved Cowper, till his mind is perfectly reestablished." Indeed she was herself an invalid; her health had not recovered, and probably never fully recovered the effects of continued anxiety during her last residence at Weston. Moreover if it had been advisable to remove Cowper any where, Weston undoubtedly would have been his own choice, and therefore the place of all others to be preferred.

A whimsical notion now darted—(like the sonnet,) into Hayley's head; but if he was shot on his pillow, it must have been at a very early hour[17], for off he set to Chichester, to communicate it to his friend Guy, a medical practitioner in that city, and he arrived there before Guy was up. "He had recently received," he says[18], "from Cowper a few of the most gloomy and pathetic lines that ever flowed from the pen of depression;" and Guy gave him great pleasure by saying he thought his idea might produce a striking effect on the mind of their dejected friend.

The result of this "idea" Hayley has thus related in his life of Cowper:

"A depression of spirits, which suspended the studies of a writer so eminently endeared to the public, was considered by men of piety and learning as a national misfortune; and several

[17] Hayley was a very early riser; and one of his "incoherent transactions" is said to have been a custom which he had, when he had any guests in the house, of going into their rooms as soon as he had risen, and throwing their windows open. [18] To his son, June 22, 1797.

individuals of this description, though personally unknown to Cowper, wrote to him, in the benevolent hope that expressions of friendly praise, from persons who could be influenced only by the most laudable motives in bestowing it, might reanimate the dejected spirit of a poet not sufficiently conscious of the public service that his writings had rendered to his country, and of that universal esteem which they had so deservedly secured to their author.

"I cannot think myself authorised to mention the names of all who did honour to Cowper, and to themselves, on this occasion; but I trust the Bishop of Landaff will forgive me if my sentiments of personal regard towards him induce me to take an affectionate liberty with his name, and to gratify myself by recording, in these pages, a very pleasing example of his liberal attention to the interests of humanity.

"He endeavoured evangelically to cheer and invigorate the mind of Cowper; but the depression of that mind was the effect of bodily disorder so obstinate, that it received not the slightest relief from what, in a season of corporeal health, would have afforded the most animated gratification to this interesting invalid.

"The pressure of his malady had now made him utterly deaf to the most honourable praise."

In this account Hayley has taken no merit to himself for the curious plan which he had brought to bear. His part in it is explained by the two following letters from Lord Thurlow to Lord Kenyon; they are characteristic of their writer, and of that kindness[19] which his rough exterior concealed from those only who did not know him well.

MY DEAR LORD, Dulwich, Nov. 22, 1797.

I have been pressed by one mad poet to ask of you for another, a favour which savours of the malady of both. I have waited for an opportunity of doing it verbally; but this gout at this time of the year makes it uncertain when I can see you.

Cowper's distemper persuades him that he is unmeritable and unacceptable to God. This persuasion, *Hayley* thinks, might be refuted by the testimony of pious men to the service which

[19] The late Lord Kenyon preserved them for that reason; and to the present lord, the readers, as well as the author of this biography, are *obliged for* a communication which so curiously fills up the omission in *Hayley's half-told* tale.

his works have done to religion and morals. He has therefore set on foot a canvass, by the favour of Mr. George Rose, to obtain the *testimonia insignium virorum* to these services; by which means he very reasonably hopes to obtain the signatures of the King, the Bishops, the Judges, and other great and religious men who may happen to be found within the same vortex; but he doubts whether one of the chiefs is exactly within the range of that impulse, and, knowing your goodness to me, he has urged me to prefer his request. In charity to him I have consented; and if you think it an act of real charity to the other, I know you will do it.

Cowper's worth and talents I was formerly well acquainted with. The latter are still better known to the world by his writings; which are certainly filled with animated and impressive pictures of religion and virtue, and deserve every testimonial of his having done them essential service. *Laudari a laudatis viris* must give him pleasure, if his disease will admit of it; and if the effect of it in removing the malady may be doubted, the experiment seems harmless, at least, and charitable. Yours, &c. T.

It seems that Lord Kenyon thought Thurlow would best know how his old friend should be addressed upon so extraordinary an occasion; and accordingly the good-natured Ex-Chancellor drew up for the Lord Chief Justice a form of these testimonials which were to acredit a man to himself.

MY DEAR LORD,

If I find myself at a loss to write about nothing, *you*, whose mind is much more seriously employed, are scarcely better off. It occurs to me, that the young and active imaginations of Lloyd or George would outstrip us both: but to give an outline of the sort of letter which I suppose to be required, I have sketched the following:—

SIR,

If I must confess that this step is unusual, I must lament that the occasion is no less so. When inferior talents are so often misused to excite light and petulant thoughts upon subjects the most sacred, superior talents employed to excite a due reverence for them naturally engage the gratitude, of those who partake of the same zeal. Your animated and impressive expressions of piety have fairly earned the applause of the

good, by serving effectually the cause of religion. If it be thought too presuming in a creature to claim merit with his Creator, the humblest mind may hope that his dutiful endeavours will be accepted there. The tribute of my attestation, though not flattering to the *poet*, may yet gratify the *Christian*, by the assurance that he has been successful in the service of our God. This is my motive; which probably will reconcile, to a mind so candid as yours, the occasion I have taken to avow the esteem with which

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your respectful friend,
And most obedient servant, KENYON.

The object of the letter proposed, as I collect from Hayley, is to persuade him that he is not rejected. The blunt assurance of this from a stranger, *apropos* to nothing, must revolt him, if he is not too far gone to be moved by any thing; but insinuated, upon an occasion smoothed over for the purpose, it may perhaps be swallowed. Some care at the same time is due to the appearance which such a letter may have; for though I hope his friends are too discreet to let it be seen by others, yet such an accident is worth looking to.

Yours, &c. T.

An experiment of Mr. Johnson's was attended with better success. The summer of 1797 had closed, and he dreaded the disuse of bodily exercise during the approaching season, unless Cowper could be induced once more to employ himself. "One morning, therefore, after breakfast, in the month of September, he placed the commentators on the table, one by one, opening them all, together with the poet's translation at the place where he had left off twelve months before; but talking with him as he paced the room upon a very different subject, namely, the impossibility of the things befalling him which his imagination had represented." This led to such a question as it was wished to call forth,—"And are you sure that I shall be here till the book you are reading is finished?" "Quite sure," replied his kinsman; "and that you will also be here to complete the revisal of your Homer, (pointing to the books,) if you will resume it to day." As he repeated these words Mr. Johnson left the room, "rejoicing," he says, "in the well *known* token of their having sunk into the poet's mind,

ımely, his seating himself on the sofa, taking up one of the ›oks, and saying, in a low and plaintive voice, 'I may as well › this, for I can do nothing else.'" Fortunate[20], indeed, was for him that he had been trained up in that sound learning hich had made him from his youth familiar with these incomırable poems. The friends who ministered to him during the st melancholy years of his life, were, as Mrs. Unwin had been a happier time, thankful to Providence when they saw him ıgaged upon his translation of them. Mr. Johnson says ıat it was singularly medicinal to his mind, that more than ıy thing else it withdrew him from the contemplation of his wn frightful delusions, and that it "seemed to extend his reathing, which was at other times short, to a depth of respiıtion more compatible with ease." From this time the reviion was never laid aside.

In the following summer it was thought best to repeat their isit to the coast, but instead of continuing there for some ıonths, to remain a week at a time, and vary their way of life y returning to Dereham. Before their first migration Cowper rrote to Lady Hesketh[21].

June 1, 1798.

Under the necessity of addressing you, as I have done in ›ther days, though these are such as seem to myself absolutely o forbid it,—I say as usual, my dear cousin; and having said t, am utterly at a loss to proceed. Mr. Johnson says that ve are going on Monday to Mundsley, and bids me to tell ou so; but at present he acknowledges himself that it is un-

[20] One of his recent biographers says, "We admire the perseverance in ı laborious task, the ardent spirit which could now devote its energies to the pursuit of fame, but we regret that life's lingering light,—light from Heaven for heavenly purposes,—should have been directed to illuminate a profitless and earthly toil, leaving eternal interests unprovided for; like the last rays of the sinking sun resting in barren sweetness upon the cold sterility of the mountain top." The gentleman who writes thus with so much effort and so little consideration has the modesty to pronounce that "the very first line of the Iliad betrays Cowper's superficial acquirements in Greek literature"!! [21] Mr. Raimondi has favoured me with a copy of this letter; the original is in the possession of a lady at Reading, to whom it was given by Mr. Hill's widow. Lady Hesketh numbered the letters which Cowper wrote to her from Norfolk, as far as ben, out of which number she had parted with two; one has been thus recovered. I have incorporated them in the Life instead of arranging hem among his Letters, because *they belong* peculiarly to his case.

certain whether we go or not, since we cannot know till to-morrow whether there is place for us there, or the lodgings be already full.

Whether the journey be practicable or otherwise, and wherever I am, my distress is infinite; for I see no possible way of escape, in my circumstances, from miseries such as I doubt not will far exceed my most terrible expectations. To wish, therefore, that I had never existed, which has been my only reasonable wish for many years, seems all that remains to one who once dreamed of happiness, but awoke never to dream of it again, and who under the necessity of concluding as he began, subscribes himself your affectionate

W. COWPER.

Often as he went to the coast during this season, Homer was always his companion now, and contributed, it is said, considerably to that mitigation of his melancholy which was produced by change of scene and diversity of objects. Now too, instead of novels, he allowed Gibbon's Miscellaneous Works to be read to him and the Pursuits of Literature: but when his attention was not thus drawn from himself by impressions from without, he relapsed into the same fixed gloom. The Dowager Lady Spencer came many miles out of her way to call on him. A visit from this lady at Weston, eight years before, had gratified him highly at the time. "I may receive perhaps," he then said[22], "some honours hereafter, should my translation speed according to my wishes and the pains I have taken with it; but shall never receive any that I shall esteem so highly." His Odyssey was dedicated to her, and on the morning of this second visit he happened to have begun the revisal of that poem. "Such an incident in a happier season," says Hayley, "would have produced a very enlivening effect on his spirits; but he scarcely spoke to her now."

It seems as if Lady Hesketh had proposed that he should try the effect of a longer journey and a greater change, and visit her at Clifton; for he replies thus to a letter from her at this time.

DEAR COUSIN, Mundsley, Oct. 13, 1798.

You describe delightful scenes, but you describe them to one who, if he even saw them, could receive no delight from

[22] To Mr. Johnson, Nov. 26, 1790.

them,—who has a faint recollection, and so faint as to be like an almost forgotten dream, that once he was susceptible of pleasure from such causes. The country that you have had in prospect has been always famed for its beauties; but the wretch who can derive no gratification from a view of nature, even under the disadvantage of her most ordinary dress, will have no eyes to admire her in any. In one day, in one moment I should rather have said, she became an *universal blank* to me, and, though from a different cause, yet with an effect as difficult to remove, as blindness itself. In this country, if there are not mountains, there are hills; if not broad and deep rivers, yet such as are sufficient to embellish a prospect: and an object still more magnificent than any river, the ocean itself, is almost immediately under the window. Why is scenery like this, I had almost said, why is the very scene, which many years since I could not contemplate without rapture, now become, at the best, an insipid wilderness to me? It neighbours nearly, and as nearly resembles the scenery of Catfield; but with what different perceptions does it present me! The reason is obvious. My state of mind is a medium through which the beauties of Paradise itself could not be communicated with any effect but a painful one.

There is a wide interval between us, which it would be far easier for you than for me to pass. Yet I should in vain invite you. We shall meet no more. I know not what Mr. Johnson said of me in the long letter he addressed to you yesterday, but nothing, I am sure, that could make such an event seem probable.

I remain as usual, dear cousin,

yours, WM. COWPER.

Toward the close of the year his old and kind and highly esteemed friend, Sir John Throckmorton, who was then on a visit to Lord Petre, rode over to see him. Cowper manifested no pleasure at his sight; yet he mentioned him to Lady Hesketh in the following letter, as if he had beheld him with more interest than he had expressed.

DEAR COUSIN, Dereham, Dec. 8, 1798.

If *I* gave you your copy of the verses you mention, I do not know how it should be imperfect; nor, if you made it yourself, how it should be so defective as to require my corrections.

If any stanza, ending with the words inserted in your letter to Mr. Johnson, was omitted, it is also omitted in the copy that is here, and it is utterly impossible that I should now replace it, incapable as I am of recollecting a single stanza of the whole. The copy that is in Mr. Johnson's possession he will send to-morrow.

I give all my miserable days to the revisal of Homer, and often many hours of the night to the same hopeless employment;—hopeless on every account; both because myself am such while engaged in it, and because it is in vain that I bestow any labour at all upon it, on account of the unforeseen impossibility of doing justice to a poet of such great antiquity in a *modern* language, and in a species of metre far less harmonious than that of the original. That under such disabling circumstances, and in despair both of myself and of my work, I should yet attend to it, and even feel something like a wish to improve it, would be unintelligible to me, if I did not know that my volitions, and consequently my actions, are under a perpetual irresistible influence. Whatever they were in the earlier part of my life, that such they are now, is, with me, a matter of every day's experience.

This doctrine I once denied, and even now assert the truth of it respecting myself only. There can be no peace where there is no freedom; and he is a wretch indeed who is a necessitarian by experience.

Sir John Throckmorton was here this day se'nnight, much altered since I saw him last, more than I should have thought possible in so short a time, yet not so much but that I should have known him anywhere. His horse had fallen under him on his way hither, and perhaps he had received more hurt than he acknowledged, which might have some effect in the alteration of his looks that I have mentioned.

It is little worth while to return to the subject of Homer, but I will just add, that I have proceeded in the revisal as far, and somewhat farther than the fifteenth book of the Odyssey.

I remain, dear cousin,

yours as usual, WM. COWPER.

Mr. Johnson desires me to tell you, that this being Sunday, he has no time to finish his letter to-day, but will send it by the post of to-morrow.

us the year 1798 closed. On the eighth of the following h he completed the revisal of his Homer, began a preface to ew edition the next morning, and on the day after con- d it. He was then without employment: and when Mr. son, on the day following, laid the commencement of his ded poem on the Four Ages before him: he corrected a ines, and added two or three more. The will was not ing; but he felt too surely that the time for such an under- g had gone by, and he declined to proceed with it, saying, vas too great a work for him to attempt in his present ion." Not that he failed in resolution, for no man ever gled more perseveringly against the pressure of mental se, nor perhaps, considering the peculiar character of lisease, with such admirable judgment; not that his intel- al powers were in the slightest degree impaired; but he ow an old man; and nature was preparing to deliver him the body of that death, in which his gentle spirit had so and so severely suffered.

at evening at supper, other projects of easier accom- ment were suggested to him. He objected to them all, but gth observed, that he had just thought of six Latin verses, f he could compose any thing it must be in pursuing that osition. Accordingly, the next morning, his desk was d for him, and all things duly arranged; he then com- d to paper the commencement of his poem on the Ice ds; and soon afterwards translated it, at Miss Perowne's st, into English. It was then recollected, that when they at Dunham Lodge an account of these islands had been to him in one of the Norwich papers, though it had not ed to engage his notice at the time. On the day after translation was made, he wrote The Cast-away, founded an incident related in Anson's Voyages. It is the last al piece that he composed, and, all circumstances con- ed, one of the most affecting that ever was composed.

THE CAST-AWAY.

Obscurest night involved the sky;
The' Atlantic billows roar'd,
When such a destin'd wretch as I,
Wash'd headlong from on board,
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
His floating home for ever left.

No braver chief could Albion boast,
  Than he, with whom he went,
Nor ever ship left Albion's coast,
  With warmer wishes sent.
He loved them both, but both in vain,
Nor him beheld, nor her again.

Not long beneath the whelming brine,
  Expert to swim, he lay;
Nor soon he felt his strength decline,
  Or courage die away;
But waged with death a lasting strife,
Supported by despair of life.

He shouted: nor his friends had fail'd
  To check the vessel's course,
But so the furious blast prevail'd,
  That, pitiless perforce,
They left their outcast mate behind,
And scudded still before the wind.

Some succour yet they could afford!
  And, such as storms allow,
The cask, the coop, the floated cord,
  Delay'd not to bestow;
But he (they knew) nor ship nor shore,
Whate'er they gave, should visit more.

Nor cruel, as it seem'd, could he
  Their haste himself condemn,
Aware that flight, in such a sea
  Alone could rescue them;
Yet bitter felt it still to die
Deserted, and his friends so nigh

He long survives, who lives an hour
  In ocean, self-upheld:
And so long he, with unspent power,
  His destiny repell'd;
And ever, as the minutes flew,
Entreated help, or cried—"Adieu!"

At length, his transient respite past,
  His comrades, who before
Had heard his voice in every blast,
  Could catch the sound no more.
For then, by toil subdued, he drank
The stifling wave, and then he sank.

No poet wept him: but the page
  Of narrative sincere,
That tells his name, his worth, his age,
  Is wet with Anson's tear.

And tears by bards or heroes shed,
Alike immortalize the dead.

I therefore purpose not, or dream,
Descanting on his fate,
To give the melancholy theme
A more enduring date:
But misery still delights to trace
Its semblance in another's case.

No voice divine the storm allay'd,
No light propitious shone;
When, snatch'd from all effectual aid,
We perish'd, each alone:
But I beneath a rougher sea,
And whelm'd in deeper gulfs than he.

ayley has remarked how providentially friend after friend raised up for Cowper as he needed them, and that in his est seasons of calamity he was never without some affec- ıte attendant. He speaks of Miss Perowne, and Mr. John- vouches for the truth of the description, as "one of those lent beings whom nature seems to have formed expressly the purpose of alleviating the sufferings of the afflicted, erly vigilant in providing for the wants of sickness, and utely firm in administering such relief as the most intelli- compassion can supply." Notwithstanding the great aver- which he had latterly had to medicine, Cowper would it from her hands, and he preferred her assistance to that ny other person. He was not less fortunate in his kins- "I never saw," says Hayley, "the human being that d, I think, have sustained the delicate and arduous office hich Mr. Johnson persevered to the last, through a period ›ng, with an equal portion of unvaried tenderness and un- en fidelity. A man who wanted sensibility would have nced the duty; and a man endowed with a particle too ı must have felt his own health utterly undermined by xcess of sympathy with the sufferings perpetually in his ."

ıe last reading to which Cowper listened appears to have that of his own works. Beginning with the first volume, Johnson went through them, and he listened to them in ce till they came to John Gilpin, which he begged not to . It reminded him of cheerful days, and of those of whom

he could not bear to think. His kinsman then proceeded t his unpublished poems; these he heard willingly, but made n remark on them.

On the same day that he had written the Cast-away, Mr Johnson laid his old favourite Vincent Bourne before him and from time to time invited, in like manner, his attentio to many Greek and Latin pieces of the minor poets. Fro employment of this kind he seems never to have shrunk agai till utterly incapacitated by bodily weakness. He translate also a few of Gay's Fables into Latin; among them was th Hare and many Friends: "Oh," said he, "that I could recall th days when I could repeat this fable by heart,—when I used t be called upon to do so for the amusement of company!"— Better and happier days were now rapidly drawing near.

In December they removed to a much more commodiou house in the same town. Hayley was at this time printing hi Essay on Sculpture, and in composing a note upon the work o Dædalus, representing the dance of Ariadne, as described i the Iliad, he perceived, by a remark of D'Hancarville in hi *Antiquités Etrusques, Grecs et Romaines*, that both Pope an Cowper had injured the passage by mistaking the meanin of one word. He wrote therefore to Mr. Johnson, hopin that Cowper would correct this error, because he meant t quote the lines in his book. It was immediately altered; an the improved lines written by Cowper, "in a firm and delicat hand,".. (no doubt the same letter-by-letter writing that ha before been noticed), were enclosed to Felpham by Mr. John son. "Words are not strong enough," said Hayley[22], in hi reply, "to express my delight in your kind letter, and th friendly Homeric favour from our dear reviving bard. Wha an enchanting *signum salutis!*—I write to the dear bard him self, because I think he must be well enough to receive a lette of genuine gratitude with some degree of pleasure. But I enclose my letter to you, that you may deliver it at the mos favourable moment of the day."

The letter, if it were delivered to Cowper, was not likely to raise his spirits, for it spoke of the long and severe sufferings, and all but utterly hopeless condition of Thomas Hayley, to whom he had been so much attached,.. and who, in fact, *died only* a week after him. But it enclosed a sonnet, inscribed

[22] Feb. 1, 1800.

"TO OUR MOST KIND AND MOST DEAR COWPER.

"BLESS'D be the characters, so kindly traced
In that dear hand, which I have long'd to view!
Pledge of affection old, and kindness new
From the reviving bard, supremely graced
With all the gifts of fancy, and of taste,
That can endear the mind; and, given to few,
The rarer, richer gift, a heart as true
As e'er the arms of amity embraced.
Ecstatic tears I on the paper shed,
That speaks, my Cowper, of thy mental health,
And of thy friendship, soothing as the dove.
So weeps the nymph, who, when long storms are fled,
Welcomes from sea, her bosom's rescued wealth
To life, to joy, to glory, and to love."

was happy for Hayley that he could always cheer himself hope, even in the most hopeless circumstances. The lines h Cowper sent him, in that firm but altered hand, were ast he ever wrote. On the day that they were received at ham, decided appearances of dropsy were observed in his es and feet. A physician was called in; it was with difficulty he could be induced to follow his prescriptions, and by ast week in February his weakness was such that he could onger bear the motion of a carriage. He now ceased to : down stairs; but was still able, after breakfasting in bed, emove into another room, and remain there till evening. re the end of March he was confined altogether to his ıber; but, except at breakfast, he sate up to his meals. ıing could be gloomier than his state of mind. Dr. Lub-, of Norwich, happening to visit a patient in an adjoining ge, was requested to see him; and upon asking him how elt,—"Feel!" said Cowper, "I feel unutterable despair!" ıt his deliverance was not long delayed. Knowing that it near, Lady Hesketh would have come to see him once : in this world, if her own infirm health would have per-d it; and Hayley was, in every sense of the word, piously ıding upon his dying son. Mr. Rose came to perform this ınd painful office of true friendship. Cowper, who used ys to welcome him with delight at Weston, manifested no faction at seeing him now; but he showed evident signs egret at his departure.

ı the 19th of April it was apprehended that his death was . "*Adverting,*" Mr. Johnson says, "therefore to the

affliction, as well of body as of mind, which his beloved inmate was then enduring, his kinsman ventured to speak of his approaching dissolution as the signal of his deliverance from both these miseries. After a pause of a few moments, which was less interrupted by the objections of his desponding relation than he had dared to hope, he proceeded to an observation more consolatory still; namely, that in the world to which he was hastening, a merciful Redeemer had prepared unspeakable happiness for all his children,—and therefore for him. To the first part of this sentence he had listened with composure; but the concluding words were no sooner uttered, than his passionately expressed entreaties that his companion would desist from any further observations of a similar kind, clearly proved that, though it was on the eve of being invested with angelic light, the darkness of delusion still veiled his spirit."

He lingered five days longer. In the course of Thursday night, when he was exceedingly exhausted, Miss Perowne offered him some cordial; he rejected it, saying, "What can it signify!" and these were the last words he was heard to utter. At five in the ensuing morning, April 25, 1800, that change in the features which betokens approaching death was observed; he became insensible, and remained so till the same hour in the afternoon, when he expired so peacefully that, of the five persons who were standing at the foot and side of the bed, no one perceived the moment of his departure. "From that moment, till the coffin was closed," Mr. Johnson says, "the expression with which his countenance had settled, was that of calmness and composure, mingled, as it were, with holy surprise."

In sure and certain hope indeed for the deceased, might the remains of Cowper be committed to the ground. And never was there a burial at which the mourners might, with more sincerity of feeling, give their hearty thanks to Almighty God, that it had pleased Him to deliver the departed out of the miseries of this sinful world.

He was buried in that part of Dereham Church called St. Edmund's Chapel. Lady Hesketh, who administered to his effects, caused a monument to be erected there; for which Hayley supplied this inscription:

IN MEMORY OF

WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

BORN IN HERTFORDSHIRE, 1731.

BURIED IN THIS CHURCH, 1800.

YE who with warmth the public triumph feel
Of talents dignified by sacred zeal,
Here, to devotion's bard devoutly just,
Pay your fond tribute due to Cowper's dust!
England, exulting in his spotless fame,
Ranks with her dearest sons his favourite name.
Sense, fancy, wit, suffice not all to raise
So clear a title to affection's praise:
His highest honours to the heart belong,
His virtues form'd the magic of his song.

There too a tablet, to the memory of Mrs. Unwin, "was ised by two other friends, (it is not said who,) impressed with just and deep sense of her extraordinary merit." For this so the inscription was composed by Hayley.

IN MEMORY OF

MARY,

WIDOW OF THE REV. MORLEY UNWIN,

AND

MOTHER OF THE REV. WILLIAM CAWTHORNE UNWIN.

BORN AT ELY, 1724.

BURIED IN THIS CHURCH, 1796

TRUSTING in God, with all her heart and mind,
This woman proved magnanimously kind;
Endured affliction's desolating hail,
And watch'd a poet through misfortune's vale.
Her spotless dust, angelic guards defend!
It is the dust of Unwin, Cowper's friend.
That single title in itself is fame,
For all, who read his verse, revere her name.

COWPER'S MONUMENT.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

AND

ILLUSTRATIONS.

Audible illusions, p. 36.—A curious case of this kind may be found in the Life of John Bunyan: such cases indeed abound in lives of that description.

The following passage in Boswell's Life of Johnson, (vol. viii. p. 70. edit. 1835.) bears upon this subject.

"He mentioned a thing as not unfrequent, of which I had never heard before,—being *called*,—that is, hearing one's name pronounced by the voice of a known person at a great distance, far beyond the possibility of being reached by any sound uttered by human organs. 'An acquaintance, on whose veracity I can depend, told me, that walking home one evening to Kilmarnock he heard himself *called* from a wood, by the voice of a brother who had gone to America; and the next packet brought account of that brother's death.' Macbean asserted that this inexplicable *calling* was a thing very well known. Dr. Johnson said, that one day at Oxford, as he was turning the key of his chamber, he heard his mother distinctly call *Sam*. She was then at Lichfield; but nothing ensued. This phenomenon, (Boswell adds,) is, I think, as wonderful as any other mysterious fact which many people are very slow to believe, or rather indeed reject with an obstinate contempt."

Mrs. Piozzi (Ib. ix. p. 69,) relates the same story, with only a difference of date: "I well remember," says this lady, "that at Brighthelmstone once, when he was not present, Mr. Beauclerc asserted that he was afraid of spirits; and I, who was secretly offended at the charge, asked him, the first opportunity I could find, what ground he had ever given to the world for such a report? 'I can,' replied he, 'recollect nothing nearer it, than my telling Dr. Lawrence many years ago, that a long time after my poor mother's death, I heard her voice call *Sam!*'—'What answer did the Doctor make to your story, Sir?' said I. 'None in the world,' replied he, and suddenly changed the conversation. Now, as Mr. Johnson had a most unshaken faith, without any mixture of credulity, this story must either have been strictly true, or his persuasion of its truth the effect of disordered spirits. I relate the anecdote precisely as he told it me; but could not prevail upon him to draw out the talk into length for further satisfaction of my curiosity."

A more remarkable example of these organic illusions is within my own knowledge. One who is so deaf that he hears only through a trumpet has at times distinct impressions of hearing a pack of hounds with huntsmen in full cry,—a barrel organ in the street, &c.

The famous story of Mrs. Honeywood, p. 81.—I have given in the text that version which was evidently in Cowper's mind. A different one, less pertinent to his own state, and in itself less probable, is thus related in

the life of Fox, the martyrologist, by his son, who prefaced it by saying, "many things did Master Fox foretell, by occasion of comforting the afflicted, or terrifying those that were stubborn, to which the event proved after answerable: and perchance in many things he was deceived."—After relating a prediction that the Lady Anne Heneage would recover, when the physician had pronounced her fever deadly, which prediction was verified by the event; "like to this," he says, "and no less true was that story of Mrs. Honeywood, an honourable gentlewoman, who had almost twenty years lain sick of a consumption through melancholy; neither did any one seem to have advice or courage sufficient against the force of so mischievous a disease, though she had already consulted with the gravest divines, and the best physicians, and with all who either in the art of curing, or power of persuading, were accounted to excel the rest. At length she sent also for Master Fox. They who went along with him thither, related afterward, that never had they entered into a more heavy or afflicted house. They sate by the sick woman to attend her, her friends, kinsfolk, children, and servants, some upon seats, and some on the chamber floor, not weeping or sighing, as those commonly do that lament, but having spent all their tears, resolutely silent, neither rising to those that came in, nor answering those that asked any question, as if that also became their mourning. You might have guessed them so many statues of mourners in human likeness. The sick woman lay upon her bed, without any hope of life, together with her frequent sighs faintly breathing forth some few words; the effect whereof was that she desired to end her days. Master Fox, when he had so many patients under his hands at once, not thinking fit, where a grief so violent would make strong resistance, to attempt any thing in vain, lest in not being by reason overcome they might seem to have had reason on their side, left all other means of consolation, and what he thought necessary to cure their afflicted minds, he diligently mingled with his prayers; so that within a few days, they who were thought impossible by man's help to be cured, did now seem of their own accord to begin to recover. At length, having farther endeared himself, he then told her that she should not only grow well of that consumption, but also live to an exceeding great age. At which words the sick gentlewoman, a little moved, and earnestly beholding Master Fox, 'as well might you have said,' quoth she, 'that if I should throw this glass against the wall, I might believe it would not break to pieces!' and holding a glass in her hand, out of which she had newly drank, she threw it forth; neither did the glass, first by chance lighting on a little chest standing by the bed-side, and afterward falling upon the ground, either break or crack in any place about it. And the event fell out accordingly. For the gentlewoman, being then threescore years of age, lived afterward for all example of felicity, seldom seen in the offspring of any family; being able, before the ninetieth year of her age, (for she lived longer,) to reckon three hundred and three score of her children's children and grandchildren."

"Among which, (says a marginal note,) at this day, to wit, in the year *of our* Lord 1641, in which this book is set forth, there liveth Mrs. Grace *Heneage, the* daughter of the said Mrs. Honeywood, a gentlewoman of

great worth, and the widow of an [illegible] gentleman, Master [illegible] Heneage, who affirmeth that she was present at the same time this was done, being a witness of more integrity and more sincere than that her testimony should without great wrong be doubted."

East Dereham, p. 136.—"In the centre of the town stands a square column, on the sides of which are marked the distances in measured miles from the principal towns and seats in the county. They are said not to be strictly accurate; but it is a little singular that the distance marked upon this pillar serves to explain the meaning of the term [illegible] which has by many been interpreted the French [illegible] of three miles. Dereham is sixteen miles from Norwich; and in the Rolls of the King's Bench it appears that the Bishop had a fair at this place, which was [illegible] sixteen *leucas* from the palace at Norwich."—*Beauties of England and Wales*, vol. xi. p. 268.

Mrs. Unwin's death, p. 138.—The two following letters, written by Mr. Johnson, on the day of Mrs. Unwin's decease, will be read with interest. For the first I am obliged to Mr. Donne, of Mattishall; for the latter, to Mr. Powley, of Langwathby.

TO MISS JOHNSON

MY DEAR KATE, E. D. Saturday Evening.

The dear old lady's long expected release from a world of sufferings took place at one o'clock this afternoon.

Our dear blessed cousin, who is a perfect angel, I verily believe, took it as calmly as we could expect. He and I were with her at half past twelve, and we were sitting by the study fire, reading the latter part of Miss Burney's third volume of Camilla, when Mr. J. P. called me out.

About half past four he seemed to wish to see her, and I went with him. A bright ray of sensibility struck his poor breast, after he had stood looking at her about a minute, and he flung himself to the other side of the room, as from an object that it was too much for him to look at. It is the first time, since he was taken ill at Weston, that the *smallest shadow of feeling* has ever been perceived in him. But the dear soul looked so placid, and so different from what she did when he and I saw her at half past twelve, that I am quite happy to think he has seen her.

At first he fancied he saw her *stir*, but on a nearer inspection the features of ghastly death struck him so forcibly as to occasion his tearing himself away as I mentioned above.

Before he saw her he said he was sure she was not *dead*, but would come to life again in the grave and undergo the horrors of suffocation, and all on his account—he is the occasion of all that she or any other creature upon the earth ever *did* or *can* suffer—only think of this idea in a mind like his ! !

But thank God he is wonderfully calm now, and made me give him a glass of wine the moment he got down, and took two pinches of snuff, which he has not done since Monday.

Yours, ever affectionately and faithfully, J. J.

TO THE REV. MR. POWLEY, DEWSBURY, NEAR LEEDS, YORKSHIRE.

MY DEAR SIR, East Dereham, Dec. 17, 1796. Saturday.

At one o'clock this afternoon poor Mrs. Unwin expired without the

smallest symptom of a painful dissolution. Miss Perowne, and Sally, and a nurse who was called in last night, were all standing by her bedside at the moment when the awful change took place, and they all say they never witnessed so easy a death.

Poor Mr. Cowper and I had been in the room about half an hour before, and I was reading to him in the study at his own particular request, when Miss Perowne called me out to say that all was over.

I wrote to Mr. Newton yesterday, to inform him that his dear friend and sister in the gospel of our Lord was on the verge of the land of blessedness; and I flatter myself that he received my letter this morning before the dear soul died, and if he had I am sure that he remembered us in his prayers at the throne of grace for a suitable effect upon the hearts of those who witnessed a believer's going to glory! I had no hope that you could receive the intelligence in time, or I should have made a similar request to you and yours.

I know not when I can have your letter, but I hope it will arrive as soon as possible, because it will be necessary to despatch a man and horse over to give orders about the burial, whether it be at Huntingdon or Ely.

Until your letter arrives, we know not how to proceed. Mrs. Powley will, I trust, commission you to inform the relations of Mrs. Unwin, time enough for them to be present at the funeral, if they choose it; and in order to make that possible, you must, my dear souls, fix upon the day yourselves before you write to them, because of the length of time that would be lost by writing backward and forward into Norfolk. You will therefore be so good as to decide upon the time and place of interment, without thinking at all about Miss Perowne and me; and the moment I have your letter, I will dispatch a message to give directions about the grave, being previously instructed by your letter of the particular spot in the church, either of Ely or Huntingdon, the grave is to be in;—i. e. by the side of what other grave;—for I am totally ignorant of the dear soul's departed relatives in either place;—and Mr. Cowper never heard her speak upon the subject in his life.

Poor Mr. Cowper heard the aweful account as well as could be expected. God bless you both.

Yours, ever truly, J. J.

P.S. As we are ignorant of poor Mrs. Unwin's age, Mrs. Powley will be so good as not to forget it when you write.

Cowper's Monument, p. 156.—In an unpublished letter to Lady Hesketh, written while his third and supplementary volume of the Life of Cowper was in the press, Hayley says, "Be not alarmed at the awkward appearance of the drawing of the monument in the chapel, but admire my truly christian spirit of forgiveness to pardon Johnny's architect, who has so murdered the elegance of my design. However I love to bring good out of evil, and shall do so on this occasion, by introducing a second plate of the monument itself, without the chapel. Blake assures me the plaister model of the monument, now in Flaxman's study, is universally admired for its elegant simplicity."

THE

LETTERS

OF

WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

JOSEPH HILL, ESQ., COOK'S COURT, CAREY STREET, LONDON.

R JOE, Huntingdon, June 24, 1765.

only recompense I can make you for your kind attention affairs during my illness, is to tell you, that by the mercy d I am restored to perfect health both of mind and body. believe will give you pleasure; and I would gladly do ing from which you could receive it.

eft St. Alban's on the seventeenth, and arrived that day mbridge, spent some time there with my brother, and hither on the twenty-second. I have a lodging that puts ntinually in mind of our summer excursions; we have nany worse, and except the size of it, (which however is ent for a single man,) but few better. I am not quite alone, brought a servant with me from St. Alban's, who is the nirror of fidelity and affection for his master. And as the Turkish Spy says, he kept no servant, because he not have an enemy in his house, I hired mine, because ld have a friend. Men do not usually bestow these en- ms on their lackeys, nor do they usually deserve them; have had experience of mine, both in sickness and in , and never saw his fellow.

river Ouse, (I forget how they spell it,) is the most ble circumstance in this part of the world; at this town believe as wide as the Thames at Windsor; nor does the Thames better deserve that epithet, nor has it more s upon its banks, these being attributes which in strict belong to neither. Fluellin would say, they are as like fingers to my fingers, and there is salmon in both. It is

a noble stream to bathe in, and I shall make that use of it three times a week, having introduced myself to it for the first time this morning.

I beg you will remember me to all my friends, which is a task will cost you no great pains to execute: particularly remember me to those of your own house, and believe me

Your very affectionate W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAR LADY HESKETH, Huntingdon, July 1, 1765.

SINCE the visit you were so kind as to pay me in the Temple (the only time I ever saw you without pleasure), what have I not suffered! And since it has pleased God to restore me to the use of my reason, what have I not enjoyed! You know by experience, how pleasant it is to feel the first approaches of health after a fever; but, Oh the fever of the brain! To feel the quenching of that fire is indeed a blessing which I think it impossible to receive without the most consummate gratitude. Terrible as this chastisement is, I acknowledge in it the hand of an infinite justice; nor is it at all more difficult for me to perceive in it the hand of an infinite mercy likewise: when I consider the effect it has had upon me, I am exceedingly thankful for it, and, without hypocrisy, esteem it the greatest blessing, next to life itself, I ever received from the divine bounty. I pray God that I may ever retain this sense of it, and then I am sure I shall continue to be, as I am at present, really happy.

I write thus to you that you may not think me a forlorn and wretched creature; which you might be apt to do, considering my very distant removal from every friend I have in the world; a circumstance which, before this event befell me, would undoubtedly have made me so: but my affliction has taught me a road to happiness which without it I should never have found; and I know, and have experience of it every day, that the mercy of God, to him who believes himself the object of it, is more than sufficient to compensate for the loss of every other blessing.

You may now inform all those whom you think really interested in my welfare, that they have no need to be apprehensive on the score of my happiness at present. And you *yourself* will believe that my happiness is no dream, because

I have told you the foundation on which it is built. What I have written would appear like enthusiasm to many, for we are apt to give that name to every warm affection of the mind in others which we have not experienced in ourselves; but to you, who have so much to be thankful for, and a temper inclined to gratitude, it will not appear so.

I beg you will give my love to Sir Thomas, and believe that I am obliged to you both for inquiring after me at St. Alban's. Yours ever, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, Huntingdon, July 3, 1765.

WHATEVER you may think of the matter, it is no such easy thing to keep house for two people. A man cannot always live upon sheeps' heads, and liver and lights, like the lions in the Tower; and a joint of meat, in so small a family, is an endless encumbrance. My butcher's bill for last week amounted to four shillings and ten-pence. I set off with a leg of lamb, and was forced to give part of it away to my washerwoman. Then I made an experiment upon a sheep's heart, and that was too little. Next I put three pounds of beef into a pie, and this had like to have been too much, for it lasted three days, though my landlord was admitted to a share in it. Then as to small beer, I am puzzled to pieces about it. I have bought as much for a shilling, as will serve us at least a month, and it is grown sour already. In short, I never knew how to pity poor housekeepers before; but now I cease to wonder at that politic cast which their occupation usually gives to their countenance, for it is really a matter full of perplexity.

I have received but one visit since here I came. I don't mean that I have refused any, but that only one has been offered. This was from my woollen-draper; a very healthy, wealthy, sensible, sponsible man, and extremely civil. He has a cold bath, and has promised me a key of it, which I shall probably make use of in the winter. He has undertaken, too, to get me the St. James's Chronicle three times a-week, and to show me Hinchinbrook House, and to do every service for me in his power; so that I did not exceed the truth, you see, when I spoke of his civility. Here is a card-assembly, and a dancing-assembly, and a horse-race, and a club, and a bowling-green, so that I am well off, you perceive, in point of diversions;

especially as I shall go to 'em, just as much as I should if I lived a thousand miles off. But no matter for that; the spectator at a play is more entertained than the actor; and in real life it is much the same. You will say, perhaps, that if I never frequent these places, I shall not come within the description of a spectator; and you will say right. I have made a blunder, which shall be corrected in the next edition.

You are an old dog at a bad tenant; witness all my uncle's and your mother's geese and gridirons. There is something so extremely impertinent in entering upon a man's premises, and using them without paying for 'em, that I could easily resent it if I would. But I rather choose to entertain myself with thinking how you will scour the man about, and worry him to death, if once you begin with him. Poor toad! I leave him entirely to your mercy.

My dear Joe, you desire me to write long letters—I have neither matter enough, nor perseverance enough for the purpose. However, if you can but contrive to be tired of reading as soon as I am tired of writing, we shall find that short ones answer just as well; and, in my opinion, this is a very practicable measure.

My friend Colman has had good fortune; I wish him better fortune still; which is, that he may make a right use of it. The tragedies of Lloyd and Bensley are both very deep. If they are not of use to the surviving part of society, it is their own fault.

I was debtor to Bensley seven pounds, or nine, I forget which. If you can find out his brother, you will do me a great favour, if you will pay him for me; but do it at your leisure. Yours and theirs, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Huntingdon, July 4, 1765.

Being just emerged from the Ouse, I sit down to thank you, my dear cousin, for your friendly and comfortable letter. What could you think of my unaccountable behaviour to you in that visit I mentioned in my last? I remember I neither spoke to you, nor looked at you. The solution of the mystery indeed followed soon after, but at the time it must have been inexplicable. The uproar within was even then begun, and my silence was only the sulkiness of a thunderstorm before it opens. I

am glad, however, that the only instance in which I knew not how to value your company was, when I was not in my senses. It was the first of the kind, and I trust in God it will be the last.

How naturally does affliction make us Christians! and how impossible is it when all human help is vain, and the whole Earth too poor and trifling to furnish us with one moment's peace, how impossible is it then to avoid looking at the Gospel! It gives me some concern, though at the same time it increases my gratitude, to reflect that a convert made in Bedlam is more likely to be a stumbling block to others, than to advance their faith. But if it has that effect upon any, it is owing to their reasoning amiss, and drawing their conclusions from false premises. He who can ascribe an amendment of life and manners, and a reformation of the heart itself, to madness, is guilty of an absurdity that in any other case would fasten the imputation of madness upon himself; for by so doing he ascribes a reasonable effect to an unreasonable cause, and a positive effect to a negative. But when Christianity only is to be sacrificed, he that stabs deepest is always the wisest man. You, my dear cousin, yourself will be apt to think I carry the matter too far, and that in the present warmth of my heart I make too ample a concession in saying, that I am *only now* a convert. You think I always believed, and I thought so too; but you were deceived, and so was I. I called myself indeed a Christian; but He who knows my heart knows that I never did a right thing, nor abstained from a wrong one, because I was so; but if I did either, it was under the influence of some other motive. And it is such seeming Christians, such pretending believers, that do most mischief to the cause, and furnish the strongest arguments to support the infidelity of its enemies: unless profession and conduct go together, the man's life is a lie, and the validity of what he professes itself is called in question. The difference between a Christian and an Unbeliever would be so striking, if the treacherous allies of the Church would go over at once to the other side, that I am satisfied religion would be no loser by the bargain.

I reckon it one instance of the Providence that has attended me throughout this whole event, that instead of being delivered into the hands of one of the London physicians, who were so much nearer that I wonder I was not, I was carried to Doctor

Cotton. I was not only treated by him with the greatest tenderness while I was ill, and attended with the utmost diligence, but when my reason was restored to me, and I had so much need of a religious friend to converse with, to whom I could open my mind upon the subject without reserve, I could hardly have found a fitter person for the purpose. My eagerness and anxiety to settle my opinions upon that long neglected point made it necessary that, while my mind was yet weak, and my spirits uncertain, I should have some assistance. The doctor was as ready to administer relief to me in this article likewise, and as well qualified to do it, as in that which was more immediately his province. How many physicians would have thought this an irregular appetite, and a symptom of remaining madness! But if it were so, my friend was as mad as myself; and it is well for me that he was so.

My dear cousin, you know not half the deliverances I have received; my brother is the only one in the family who does. My recovery is indeed a signal one; but a greater, if possible, went before it. My future life must express my thankfulness, for by words I cannot do it.

I pray God to bless you and my friend Sir Thomas.

Yours ever, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAR LADY HESKETH, Huntingdon, July 5, 1765.

My pen runs so fast you will begin to wish you had not put it in motion, but you must consider we have not met even by letter almost these two years, which will account in some measure for my pestering you in this manner; besides, my last was no answer to yours, and therefore I consider myself as still in your debt. To say truth, I have this long time promised myself a correspondence with you as one of my principal pleasures.

I should have written to you from St. Alban's long since, but was willing to perform quarantine first, both for my own sake and because I thought my letters would be more satisfactory to you from any other quarter. You will perceive I allowed myself a very sufficient time for the purpose, for I date my recovery from the twenty-fifth of last July, having been ill seven months, and well twelve months. It was on that day my brother came to see me. I was far from well when he came in; yet, though he only staid one day with me, his company

served to put to flight a thousand deliriums and delusions which I still laboured under, and the next morning I found myself a new creature. But to the present purpose.

As far as I am acquainted with this place, I like it extremely. Mr. Hodgson, the minister of the parish, made me a visit the day before yesterday. He is very sensible, a good preacher, and conscientious in the discharge of his duty. He is very well known to Doctor Newton, Bishop of Bristol, the author of the treatise on the Prophecies, one of our best Bishops, and who has written the most demonstrative proof of the truth of Christianity, in my mind, that ever was published.

VILLAGE OF HERTFORD.

There is a village called HERTFORD, about a mile and a half from hence. The church there is very prettily situated upon a rising ground, so close to the river that it washes the wall of the churchyard. I found an epitaph there the other morning, the two first lines of which being better than any thing else I saw there I made shift to remember. It is by a widow on her husband.

> "Thou wast too good to live on earth with me,
> And I not good enough to die with thee."

The distance of this place from Cambridge is the worst circumstance belonging to it. My brother and I are fifteen miles asunder, which, considering that I came hither for the sake of being near him, is rather too much. I wish that young

man was better known in the family. He has as many qualities as his nearest kindred could wish to find in him

As Mr. Quin very roundly expressed himself upon such occasion, "here is very plentiful accommodation, great happiness of provision." So that if I starve, it be through forgetfulness, rather than scarcity.

Fare thee well, my good and dear cousin.

Ever yours, W.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAR COUSIN, July 12, 1

You are very good to me, and if you will only contin write at such intervals as you find convenient, I shall recei that pleasure which I proposed to myself from our corres ence. I desire no more than that you would never dro for any great length of time together, for I shall then you only write because something happened to put you in of me, or for some other reason equally mortifying. I am however, so unreasonable as to expect you should perform act of friendship so frequently as myself, for you live in a swarming with engagements, and my hours are almost a own. You must every day be employed in doing wh expected from you by a thousand others, and I have no to do but what is most agreeable to myself.

Our mentioning Newton's treatise on the Prophecies b to my mind an anecdote of Dr. Young, who, you know, lately at Welwyn. Dr. Cotton, who was intimate with paid him a visit about a fortnight before he was seized wit last illness. The old man was then in perfect health; the tiquity of his person, the gravity of his utterance, and earnestness with which he discoursed about religion, gave in the doctor's eye, the appearance of a prophet. They been delivering their sentiments upon this book of Ne when Young closed the conference thus:—"My friend, are two considerations upon which my faith in Christ is as upon a rock: the fall of man, the redemption of man, the resurrection of man, the three cardinal articles of our gion, are such as human ingenuity could never have inven therefore they must be divine.—The other argument is If the Prophecies have been fulfilled (of which there is a *dant demonstration*) the Scripture must be the word of

and if the Scripture is the word of God, Christianity must be true."

This treatise on the Prophecies serves a double purpose: it not only proves the truth of religion, in a manner that never has been nor ever can be controverted; but it proves likewise, that the Roman Catholic is the apostate and antichristian church, so frequently foretold both in the Old and New Testaments. Indeed, so fatally connected is the refutation of Popery with the truth of Christianity, when the latter is evinced by the completion of the Prophecies, that in proportion as light is thrown upon the one, the deformities and errors of the other are more plainly exhibited. But I leave you to the book itself; there are parts of it which may possibly afford you less entertainment than the rest, because you have never been a schoolboy; but in the main it is so interesting, and you are so fond of that which is so, that I am sure you will like it.

My dear cousin, how happy am I in having a friend to whom I can open my heart upon these subjects! I have many intimates in the world, and have had many more than I shall have hereafter, to whom a long letter upon these most important articles would appear tiresome, at least, if not impertinent. But I am not afraid of meeting with that reception from you, who have never yet made it your interest that there should be no truth in the word of God. May this everlasting truth be your comfort while you live, and attend you with peace and joy in your last moments! I love you too well not to make this a part of my prayers; and when I remember my friends on these occasions, there is no likelihood that you can be forgotten.

Yours ever, W. C.

P. S. Cambridge.—I add this postscript at my brother's rooms. He desires to be affectionately remembered to you, and if you are in town about a fortnight hence, when he proposes to be there himself, will take a breakfast with you.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAR COUSIN, Huntingdon, August 1, 1765.

If I was to measure your obligation to write by my own desire to hear from you, I should call you an idle correspondent if a post went by without bringing me a letter, but I am not so unreasonable; on the contrary, I think myself very happy in hear-

ing from you upon your own terms, as you find most convenient. Your short history of my family is a very acceptable part of your letter; if they really interest themselves in my welfare, it is a mark of their great charity for one who has been a disappointment and a vexation to them ever since he has been of consequence enough to be either. My friend the Major's behaviour to me, after all he suffered by my abandoning his interest and my own in so miserable a manner, is a noble instance of generosity and true greatness of mind: and indeed I know no man in whom those qualities are more conspicuous; one need only furnish him with an opportunity to display them, and they are always ready to show themselves in his words and actions, and even in his countenance, at a moment's warning. I have great reason to be thankful—I have lost none of my acquaintance but those whom I determined not to keep. I am sorry this class is so numerous. What would I not give, that every friend I have in the world were not almost but altogether Christians! My dear cousin, I am half afraid to talk in this style, lest I should seem to indulge a censorious humour, instead of hoping, as I ought, the best for all men. But what can be said against ocular proof? and what is hope when it is built upon presumption? To use the most Holy Name in the universe for no purpose, or a bad one, contrary to his own express commandment; to pass the day, and the succeeding days, weeks, and months, and years, without one act of private devotion, one confession of our sins, or one thanksgiving for the numberless blessings we enjoy; to hear the word of God in public with a distracted attention, or with none at all; to absent ourselves voluntarily from the blessed communion, and to live in the total neglect of it, though our Saviour has charged it upon us with an express injunction, are the common and ordinary liberties which the generality of professors allow themselves: and what is this but to live without God in the world? Many causes may be assigned for this anti-christian spirit, so prevalent among Christians; but one of the principal I take to be their utter forgetfulness that they have the word of God in their possession.

My friend Sir William Russel was distantly related to a very accomplished man, who, though he never believed the Gospel, admired the Scriptures as the sublimest compositions in the *world*, and read them often. I have been intimate myself

with a man of fine taste, who has confessed to me that, though he could not subscribe to the truth of Christianity itself, yet he never could read St. Luke's account of our Saviour's appearance to the two disciples going to Emmaus, without being wonderfully affected by it; and he thought that if the stamp of divinity was any where to be found in Scripture, it was strongly marked and visibly impressed upon that passage. If these men, whose hearts were chilled with the darkness of infidelity, could find such charms in the mere style of the Scripture, what must they find there, whose eye penetrates deeper than the letter, and who firmly believe themselves interested in all the invaluable privileges of the Gospel! "He that believeth on me is passed from death unto life," though it be as plain a sentence as words can form, has more beauties in it for such a person than all the labours antiquity can boast of. If my poor man of taste, whom I have just mentioned, had searched a little further, he might have found other parts of the sacred history as strongly marked with the characters of divinity as that he mentioned. The parable of the prodigal son, the most beautiful fiction that ever was invented; our Saviour's speech to his disciples, with which he closes his earthly ministration, full of the sublimest dignity and tenderest affection, surpass every thing that I ever read, and, like the Spirit by which they were dictated, fly directly to the heart. If the Scripture did not disdain all affectation of ornament, one should call these, and such as these, the ornamental parts of it; but the matter of it is that upon which it principally stakes its credit with us, and the style, however excellent and peculiar to itself, is only one of those many external evidences by which it recommends itself to our belief.

I shall be very much obliged to you for the book you mention; you could not have sent me any thing that would have been more welcome, unless you had sent me your own meditations instead of them. Yours, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, August 14, 1765.

BOTH Lady Hesketh and my brother had apprized me of your intention to give me a call; and herein I find they were both mistaken. But they both informed me, likewise, that you were already set out for Warwickshire; in consequence of

which latter intelligence, I have lived in continual expectation of seeing you, any time this fortnight. Now how these two ingenious personages (for such they are both) should mistake an expedition to French Flanders for a journey to Warwickshire, is more than I, with all my ingenuity, can imagine. I am glad however, that I have still a chance of seeing you, and shall treasure it up amongst my agreeable expectations. In the mean time you are welcome to the British shore, as the song has it, and I thank you for your epitome of your travels. You don't tell me how you escaped the vigilance of the custom-house officers, though I dare say you were knuckle-deep in contrabands, and had your boots stuffed with all and all manner of unlawful wares and merchandizes.

You know, Joe, I am very deep in debt to my little physician at St. Alban's, and that the handsomest thing I can do will be to pay him *le plutôt qu'il sera possible*, (this is vile French, I believe, but you can now correct it.) My brother informs me that you have such a quantity of cash in your hands, on my account, that I may venture to send him forty pounds immediately. This, therefore, I shall be obliged if you will manage for me; and when you receive the hundred pounds, which my brother likewise brags you are shortly to receive, I shall be glad if you will discharge the remainder of that debt without waiting for any further advice from your humble servant.

I am become a professed horseman, and do hereby assume to myself the stile and title of the Knight of the Bloody Spur. It has cost me much to bring this point to bear; but I think I have at last accomplished it. My love to all your family.

Yours ever, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Huntingdon, August 17, 1765.

You told me, my dear cousin, that I need not fear writing too often, and you perceive I take you at your word. At present, however, I shall do little more than thank you for the Meditations, which I admire exceedingly: the author of them manifestly loved the truth with an undissembled affection, had made a great progress in the knowledge of it, and experienced all the happiness that naturally results from that noblest of all attainments. There is one circumstance, which he gives us frequent occasion to observe in him, which I believe will ever be found

philosophy of every true Christian: I mean the emi-
rank which he assigns to faith among the virtues, as the
: and parent of them all. There is nothing more infalli-
ne than this; and doubtless it is with a view to the puri-
and sanctifying nature of a true faith, that our Saviour
'He that believeth in me hath everlasting life," with many
expressions to the same purpose. Considered in this
no wonder it has the power of salvation ascribed to it!
lered in any other, we must suppose it to operate like an
al talisman, if it obtains for us the least advantage;
is an affront to him who insists upon our having it, and
1 no other terms admit us to his favour. I mention this
guishing article in his Reflections the rather, because it
for a solid foundation to the distinction I made, in my
etween the specious professor and the true believer, be-
him whose faith is his sunday-suit and him who never
t off at all; a distinction I am a little fearful sometimes
aking, because it is a heavy stroke upon the practice of
than half the Christians in the world.

dear cousin, I told you I read the book with great
re, which may be accounted for from its own merit; but
os it pleased me the more because you had travelled the
oad before me. You know there is such a pleasure as
hich would want great explanation to some folks,—being
os a mystery to those whose hearts are a mere muscle,
rve only for the purposes of an even circulation.

W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH. Sept. 4, 1765.

GH I have some very agreeable acquaintance at Hunting-
ny dear cousin, none of their visits are so agreeable as
rival of your letters. I thank you for that which I have
eceived from Droxford; and particularly for that part of
re you give me an unlimited liberty upon the subject I
already so often written upon. Whatever interests us
as naturally flows into the pen as it does from the lips,
every restraint is taken away, and we meet with a friend
ent enough to attend to us. How many, in all the
of characters with whom I am acquainted, could I find
he strictest search, to whom I could write as I do to you?

I hope the number will increase. I am sure it cannot easily be diminished.

Poor ——! I have heard the whole of his history, and can only lament what I am sure I can make no apology for. Two of my friends have been cut off, during my illness, in the midst of such a life as it is frightful to reflect upon; and here am I, in better health and spirits than I can almost remember to have enjoyed before after having spent months in the apprehension of instant death. How mysterious are the ways of Providence! Why did I receive grace and mercy? Why was I preserved, afflicted for my good, received, as I trust, into favour, and blessed with the greatest happiness I can ever know or hope for in this life, while these were overtaken by the great arrest, unawakened, unrepenting, and every way unprepared for it? His infinite wisdom, to whose infinite mercy I owe it all, can solve these questions, and none beside him. If a free-thinker, as many a man miscalls himself, could be brought to give a serious answer to them, he would certainly say—"Without doubt, sir, you was in great danger, you had a narrow escape, a most fortunate one indeed." How excessively foolish, as well as shocking! As if life depended upon luck, and all that we are or can be, all that we have or hope for, could possibly be referred to accident! Yet to this freedom of thought it is owing that He, who, as our Saviour tell us, is thoroughly apprized of the death of the meanest of his creatures, is supposed to leave those whom he has made in his own image, to the mercy of chance; and to this therefore it is likewise owing that the correction which our heavenly Father bestows upon us, that we may be fitted to receive his blessing, is so often disappointed of its benevolent intention, and that men despise the chastening of the Almighty. Fevers and all diseases are accidents; and long life, recovery at least from sickness, is the gift of the physician. No man can be a greater friend to the use of means upon these occasions than myself, for it were presumption and enthusiasm to neglect them. God has endued them with salutary properties on purpose that we might avail ourselves of them, otherwise that part of his creation were in vain. But to impute our recovery to the medicine, and to carry our views no further, is to rob God of his honour, and is saying in effect that he has parted with the keys of life and death, and, by giving to a drug the power to heal us, has placed our

lives out of his own reach. He that thinks thus may as well fall upon his knees at once and return thanks to the medicine that cured him, for it was certainly more immediately instrumental in his recovery than either the apothecary or the doctor. My dear cousin, a firm persuasion of the superintendence of Providence over all our concerns is absolutely necessary to our happiness. Without it, we cannot be said to believe in the Scripture, or practise any thing like resignation to his will. If I am convinced that no affliction can befall me without the permission of God, I am convinced likewise that he sees and knows that I am afflicted; believing this, I must in the same degree believe that, if I pray to him for deliverance, he hears me; I must needs know likewise with equal assurance that, if he hears, he will also deliver me, if that will upon the whole be most conducive to my happiness; and if he does not deliver me, I may be well assured that he has none but the most benevolent intention in declining it. He made us, not because we could add to his happiness, which was always perfect, but that we might be happy ourselves; and will he not in all his dispensations towards us, even in the minutest, consult that end for which he made us? To suppose the contrary, is (which we are not always aware of) affronting every one of his attributes; and at the same time the certain consequence of disbelieving his care for us is, that we renounce utterly our dependence upon him. In this view it will appear plainly that the line of duty is not stretched too tight, when we are told that we ought to accept every thing at his hands as a blessing, and to be thankful even while we smart under the rod of iron with which he sometimes rules us. Without this persuasion, every blessing, however we may think ourselves happy in it, loses its greatest recommendation, and every affliction is intolerable. Death itself must be welcome to him who has this faith, and he who has it not must aim at it, if he is not a madman.

You cannot think how glad I am to hear you are going to commence lady and mistress of Freemantle[1]. I know it well, and could go to it from Southampton blindfold. You are kind to invite me to it, and I shall be so kind to myself as to accept the invitation, though I should not for a slight consideration be prevailed upon to quit my beloved retirement at Huntingdon.

Yours ever, W. C.

[1] Freemantle, a villa near Southampton.

THE FOUNTAIN.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAR COUSIN, Huntingdon, Sept. 14, 176

THE longer I live here, the better I like the place, and people who belong to it. I am upon very good terms witl less than five families, besides two or three odd scramb fellows like myself. The last acquaintance I made her with the race of the Unwins, consisting of father and mot son and daughter, the most comfortable social folks you knew. The son is about twenty-one years of age, one of most unreserved and amiable young men I ever conversed w He is not yet arrived at that time of life, when suspicion commends itself to us in the form of wisdom, and sets e thing but our own dear selves at an immeasureable distance f our esteem and confidence. Consequently he is known alr as soon as seen, and having nothing in his heart that m it necessary for him to keep it barred and bolted, opens it to perusal even of a stranger. The father is a clergyman, and son is designed for orders. The design, however, is quite own, proceeding merely from his being and having always b sincere in his belief and love of the Gospel. Another acqua ance I have lately made is with a Mr. Nicholson, a N country divine, very poor, but very good, and very happy. *reads* prayers here twice a day, all the year round;

travels on foot to serve two churches every Sunday through the year, his journey out and home again being sixteen miles. I supped with him last night. He gave me bread and cheese, and a black jug of ale of his own brewing, and doubtless brewed by his own hands. Another of my acquaintance is Mr.——, a thin, tall, old man, and as good as he is thin. He drinks nothing but water, and eats no flesh; partly (I believe) from a religious scruple (for he is very religious), and partly in the spirit of a valetudinarian. He is to be met with every morning of his life, at about six o'clock, at a FOUNTAIN of very fine water, about a mile from the town, which is reckoned extremely like the Bristol spring. Being both early risers, and the only early walkers in the place, we soon became acquainted. His great piety can be equalled by nothing but his great regularity, for he is the most perfect time-piece in the world. I have received a visit likewise from Mr. ——. He is very much a gentleman, well read, and sensible. I am persuaded, in short, that if I had the choice of all England, where to fix my abode, I could not have chosen better for myself, and most likely I should not have chosen so well.

You say, you hope it is not necessary for salvation, to undergo the same afflictions that I have undergone. No! my dear cousin. God deals with his children as a merciful father; he does not, as he himself tells us, afflict willingly the sons of men. Doubtless there are many, who, having been placed by his good providence out of the reach of any great evil and the influence of bad example, have from their very infancy been partakers of the grace of his Holy Spirit, in such a manner as never to have allowed themselves in any grievous offence against him. May you love him more and more day by day; as every day, while you think upon him, you will find him more worthy of your love: and may you be finally accepted with him for His sake, whose intercession for all his faithful servants cannot but prevail! Yours ever, W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

MY DEAR COUSIN, Huntingdon, Oct. 10, 1765.

I SHOULD grumble at your long silence, if I did not know that one may love one's friends very well, though one is not always in the humour to write to them. Besides, I have the satisfaction of being perfectly sure that you have at least twenty

times recollected the debt you owe me, and as often resolved to pay it: and perhaps while you remain indebted to me, you think of me twice as often as you would do, if the account was clear. These are the reflections with which I comfort myself, under the affliction of not hearing from you; my temper does not incline me to jealousy, and if it did, I should set all right by having recourse to what I have already received from you.

I thank God for your friendship, and for every friend I have; for all the pleasing circumstances of my situation here, for my health of body, and perfect serenity of mind. To recollect the past, and compare it with the present, is all I have need of to fill me with gratitude; and to be grateful is to be happy. Not that I think myself sufficiently thankful, or that I shall ever be so in this life. The warmest heart perhaps only feels by fits, and is often as insensible as the coldest. This, at least, is frequently the case with mine, and oftener than it should be. But the mercy that can forgive iniquity will never be severe to mark our frailties; to that mercy, my dear cousin, I commend you, with earnest wishes for your welfare, and remain your ever affectionate W. C.

TO LADY HESKETH.

Huntingdon, Oct. 18, 1765.

I WISH you joy, my dear cousin, of being safely arrived in port from the storms of Southampton. For my own part, who am but as a Thames wherry, in a world full of tempest and commotion, I know so well the value of the creek I have put into, and the snugness it affords me, that I have a sensible sympathy with you in the pleasure you find in being once more blown to Droxford. I know enough of Miss Morley to send her my compliments; to which, if I had never seen her, her affection for you would sufficiently entitle her. If I neglected to do it sooner, it is only because I am naturally apt to neglect what I ought to do; and if I was as genteel as I am negligent, I should be the most delightful creature in the universe.

I am glad you think so favourably of my Huntingdon acquaintance; they are indeed a nice set of folks, and suit me exactly. I should have been more particular in my account of Miss Unwin, if I had had materials for a minute description. *She is* about eighteen years of age, rather handsome and genteel.

In her mother's company she says little; not because her mother requires it of her, but because she seems glad of that excuse for not talking, being somewhat inclined to bashfulness. There is the most remarkable cordiality between all the parts of the family; and the mother and daughter seem to dote upon each other. The first time I went to the house I was introduced to the daughter alone; and sat with her near half an hour, before her brother came in, who had appointed me to call upon him. Talking is necessary in a *tête-à-tête*, to distinguish the persons of the drama from the chairs they sit on: accordingly she talked a great deal, and extremely well; and, like the rest of the family, behaved with as much ease of address as if we had been old acquaintance. She resembles her mother in her great piety, who is one of the most remarkable instances of it I have ever seen. They are altogether the cheerfulest and most engaging family-piece it is possible to conceive.

Since I wrote the above, I met Mrs. Unwin in the street, and went home with her. She and I walked together near two hours in the garden, and had a conversation which did me more good than I should have received from an audience of the first prince in Europe. That woman is a blessing to me, and I never see her without being the better for her company. I am treated in the family as if I was a near relation, and have been repeatedly invited to call upon them at all times. You know what a shy fellow I am; I cannot prevail with myself to make so much use of this privilege as I am sure they intend I should; but perhaps this awkwardness will wear off hereafter. It was my earnest request before I left St. Alban's, that wherever it might please Providence to dispose of me, I might meet with such an acquaintance as I find in Mrs. Unwin. How happy it is to believe, with a steadfast assurance, that our petitions are heard even while we are making them; and how delightful to meet with a proof of it in the effectual and actual grant of them! Surely it is a gracious finishing given to those means, which the Almighty has been pleased to make use of for my conversion. After having been deservedly rendered unfit for any society, to be again qualified for it, and admitted at once into the fellowship of those whom God regards as the excellent of the earth, and whom, in the emphatical language of Scripture, he preserves as the apple of his eye, is a blessing which carries with it the stamp and visible

superscription of divine bounty,—a grace unlimited as undeserved; and, like its glorious Author, free in its course, and blessed in its operation!

My dear cousin! health and happiness, and above all, the favour of our great and gracious Lord, attend you! While we seek it in spirit and in truth, we are infinitely more secure of it than of the next breath we expect to draw. Heaven and earth have their destined periods; ten thousand worlds will vanish at the consummation of all things; but the word of God standeth fast; and they who trust in him shall never be confounded.

My love to all who inquire after me.

Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO MAJOR COWPER, AT THE PARK HOUSE, NEAR HARTFORD.

MY DEAR MAJOR, Huntingdon, Oct. 18, 1765.

I HAVE neither lost the use of my fingers nor my memory, though my unaccountable silence might incline you to suspect that I had lost both. The history of those things which have, from time to time, prevented my scribbling, would not only be insipid but extremely voluminous; for which reasons they will not make their appearance at present, nor probably at any time hereafter. If my neglecting to write to you were a proof that I had never thought of you, and that had been really the case, five shillings a piece would have been much too little to give for the sight of such a monster! but I am no such monster, nor do I perceive in myself the least tendency to such a transformation. You may recollect that I had but very uncomfortable expectations of the accommodation I should meet with at Huntingdon. How much better is it to take our lot, where it shall please Providence to cast it, without anxiety! Had I chosen for myself, it is impossible I could have fixed upon a place so agreeable to me in all respects. I so much dreaded the thought of having a new acquaintance to make, with no other recommendation than that of being a perfect stranger, that I heartily wished no creature here might take the least notice of me. Instead of which, in about two months after my arrival, I became known to all the visitable people here, and do verily think it the most agreeable neighbourhood I ever saw.

Here are three families who have received me with the ut-

most civility; and two in particular have treated me with as much cordiality as if their pedigrees and mine had grown upon the same sheep-skin. Besides these, there are three or four single men who suit my temper to a hair. The town is one of the neatest in England; the country is fine, for several miles about it; and the roads, which are all turnpike, and strike out four or five different ways, are perfectly good all the year round. I mention this latter circumstance chiefly because my distance from Cambridge has made a horseman of me at last, or at least is likely to do so. My brother and I meet every week, by an alternate reciprocation of intercourse, as Sam Johnson would express it; sometimes I get a lift in a neighbour's chaise, but generally ride. As to my own personal condition, I am much happier than the day is long, and sunshine and candlelight see me perfectly contented. I get books in abundance, as much company as I choose, a deal of *comfortable leisure*, and enjoy better health, I think, than for many years past. What is there wanting to make me happy? Nothing, if I can but be as thankful as I ought; and I trust that He who has bestowed so many blessings upon me, will give me gratitude to crown them all. I beg you will give my love to my dear cousin Maria, and to every body at the Park. If Mrs. Maitland, is with you, as I suspect by a passage in Lady Hesketh's letter to me, pray remember me to her very affectionately. And believe me, my dear friend, ever yours.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, Oct. 25, 1765.

I AM afraid the month of October has proved rather unfavourable to the *belle assemblée* at Southampton; high winds and continual rains being bitter enemies to that agreeable lounge, which you and I are equally fond of. I have very cordially betaken myself to my books, and my fireside; and seldom leave them unless for exercise. I have added another family to the number of those I was acquainted with when you were here. Their name is Unwin—the most agreeable people imaginable; quite sociable, and as free from the ceremonious civility of country gentlefolks as any I ever met with. They treat me more like a near relation than a stranger, and their house is always open to me. The old gentleman carries me to Cambridge in his chaise. He is a man of learning and good sense,

and as simple as parson Adams. His wife has a very uncommon understanding, has read much to excellent purpose, and is more polite than a duchess. The son who belongs to Cambridge, is a most amiable young man, and the daughter quite of a piece with the rest of the family. They see but little company, which suits me exactly; go when I will, I find a house full of peace and cordiality in all its parts, and I am sure to hear no scandal, but such discourse instead of it as we are all better for. You remember Rousseau's description of an English morning; such are the mornings I spend with these good people; and the evenings differ from them in nothing, except that they are still more snug, and quieter. Now I know them, I wonder that I liked Huntingdon so well before I knew them, and am apt to think I should find every place disagreeable that had not an Unwin belonging to it.

This incident convinces me of the truth of an observation I have often made, that when we circumscribe our estimate of all that is clever within the limits of our own acquaintance (which I at least have been always apt to do), we are guilty of a very uncharitable censure upon the rest of the world, and of a narrowness of thinking disgraceful to ourselves. Wapping and Redriff may contain some of the most amiable persons living, and such as one would go to Wapping and Redriff to make acquaintance with. You remember Mr. Gray's stanza—

> "Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
> The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
> Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
> And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

Yours, dear Joe, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, Nov. 5, 1765.

I WROTE to you about ten days ago,

> Soliciting a quick return of gold,
> To purchase certain horse that like me well.

Either my letter or your answer to it, I fear, has miscarried. The former, I hope; because a miscarriage of the latter might be attended with bad consequences.

I find it impossible to proceed any longer in my present course, without danger of bankruptcy. I have therefore entered into an agreement with the Rev. Mr. Unwin, to lodge

ıd board with him. The family are the most agreeable in ıe world. They live in a special good house, and in a very ɜnteel way. They are all exactly what I would wish them to ɜ, and I know I shall be as happy with them as I can be on ıis side of the sun. I did not dream of this matter till about ɾe days ago: but now the whole is settled. I shall transfer yself thither as soon as I have satisfied all demands upon me ɜre. Yours ever, W. C.

I know nobody so like Mrs. Unwin as my Aunt Madan, I ɔn't mean in person, for she is a much younger woman, but ı character.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR SEPHUS, Nov. 8, 1765.

OTWITHSTANDING it is so agreeable a thing to read Law ectures to the Students of Lyons' Inn, especially to the ɜader himself, I must beg leave to waive it. Danby Pickering ıust be the happy man; and I heartily wish him joy of his eputyship. As to the treat, I think if it goes before the ɜcture, it will be apt to blunt the apprehension of the students; nd if it comes after, it may erase from their memories im-ɾessions so newly made. I could wish, therefore, that for heir benefit and behoof, this circumstance were omitted. But f it be absolutely necessary, I hope Mr. Salt, or whoever takes he conduct of it, will see that it be managed with the frugality ınd temperance becoming so learned a body. I shall be ɔbliged to you if you will present my respects to Mr. Treasurer ɔalt, and express my concern at the same time, that he had he trouble of sending me two letters upon this occasion. The ırst of them never came to hand.

I think the Welshman must *morris*;—what think you? If e withdraws to his native mountains we shall never catch im; so the best way is to let him run in debt no longer.

As to E—, if he will listen to anything, it must be to a re-ıonstrance from you. A letter has no more effect upon him ıan a messenger sent up to a paper kite; and he will make ɜe pay the postage of all my epistles into the bargain.

I shall be obliged to you if you will tell me whether my ex-ıequer is full or empty, and whether the revenue of last year yet come in, that I may proportion my payments to the ɔigencies of my affairs.

My dear Sephus, give my love to your family, and believe me much obliged to you for your invitation. At present I am in such an unsettled condition, that I can think of nothing but laying the foundation of my future abode at Unwin's. My being admitted there, is the effect of the great good nature and friendly turn of that family, who I have great reason to believe are as desirous to do me service as they could be after a much longer acquaintance. Let your next, if it comes a week hence, be directed to me there.

The greatest part of the law books are those which Lord Cowper gave me. Those, and the very few which I bought myself, are all at the Major's service.

Stroke puss's back the wrong way and it will put her in mind of her master. Yours ever, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR SEPHUS, Dec. 3, 1765.

THAT I may return as particular an answer to your letter as possible, I will take it *item* by *item*.

First, then, I rejoice with you in the victory you have obtained over the Welshman's pocket. The reluctance with which he pays, and promises to pay, gives me but little concern, further than as it seems to threaten you with the trouble of many fruitless applications hereafter, in the receipt of my lordship's rents.

Secondly, I am glad that you have received some money on my account; and am still more pleased that you have so much in bank, after the remittances already made. But that which increases my joy to the highest pitch of possible augmentation, is, that you expect to receive more shortly.

Thirdly, I should be quite in raptures with the fair promises of Mr. E—, if I believed he was in earnest. But the propensity of that gentleman to indulge himself in a jocular humour upon these serious occasions, though it is very entertaining, is not quite so good a joke as the performance of those promises would be. But men of wit are apt to be a little whimsical.

Fourthly, I do recollect that I myself am a little guilty of what I blame so much in Mr. E—: in the last letter I wrote you, having returned you so facetious an answer to your serious enquiry concerning the entertainment to be given or not to be

iven to the gentlemen of New Inn, that you must needs have een at a loss to collect from it my real intentions. My sincere esire, however, in this respect is, that they may fast; and eing supported in this resolution, not only by an assurance hat I can, and therefore ought to make a better use of my ioney, but also by the examples of my predecessors in the ame business, Mr. Barrington and Mr. Schutz, I have no ınger any doubt concerning the propriety of condemning hem to abstinence upon this occasion; and cannot but wish hat point may be carried, if it can be done without engaging 'ou in the trouble of any disagreeable haggling, and higgling, nd twisting, and wriggling to save my money.

Lastly, if I am not mistaken, I owe Thurlow five guineas. 3e so kind as to pay him when he happens to fall in your vay. Yours, my dear Joe, W. C.

The fire of the general election begins to smoke here already.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR SEPHUS, Huntingdon, March 10, 1766.

: THINK the remainder of Dr. Cotton's account is sixty-five ounds. I should have advised the payment of it before this ime, but the time of general payment advances apace, and I ıave been afraid of wanting money for other purposes. In the leasant month of May, I intend to discharge a half-year's eckoning with Mrs. Unwin. Soon after that I shall have ervants' wages to pay, and half-a-year's maintenance of a mall youth whom I brought with me by way of pensioner rom St. Alban's. The whole amount of these three articles vill be about sixty pounds. If, *in these circumstances*, and *in his situation*, you think I can afford to quit scores with the ittle Doctor, I shall be obliged to you if you will do it forthvith. You may contrive, when you send him the cash, to sk whether he is fully paid or no, and if not, how much reıains due, and unsatisfied. More debts than money has been ıy distress this many a day, and is likely to continue so.

I have not seen the new play, nor is my curiosity so much gog, as one would have expected. We live much out of the ıeatrical sphere. My connexion with Colman is probably at n end, and it would give me therefore more pain than pleaıre to read his productions. I have seen the Epilogue and

think it wonderfully silly. I ask Fanny's pardon, for I reco lect it is Garrick's. My love to your family.

Yours, my dear Sephus, WM. COWPER.

Remember me to my Uncle when you see him.

TO MRS. COWPER, AT THE PARK HOUSE, NEAR HARTFORD

MY DEAR COUSIN.

I AM much obliged to you for Pearsall's Meditations, especiall as it furnishes me with an occasion of writing to you, which all I have waited for. My friends must excuse me, if write to none but those who lay it fairly in my way to do s The inference I am apt to draw from their silence is, that the wish *me* to be silent too.

I have great reason, my dear cousin, to be thankful to th gracious Providence that conducted me to this place. The lad in whose house I live is so excellent a person, and regards m with a friendship so truly Christian, that I could almost fanc my own mother restored to life again, to compensate to me fo all the friends I have lost, and all my connexions broke She has a son at Cambridge in all respects worthy of such mother, the most amiable young man I ever knew. Hi natural and acquired endowments are very considerable; an as to his virtues, I need only say, that he is a Christian. I ought to be a matter of daily thanksgiving to me, that I a admitted into the society of such persons; and I pray God t make me, and keep me, worthy of them.

Your brother Martin has been very kind to me, havin written to me twice in a style which, though it was once ir some to me, to say the least, I now know how to value. I pra God to forgive me the many light things I have both said an thought of him and his labours. Hereafter I shall conside him as a burning and a shining light, and as one of those "wh having turned many to righteousness, shall shine hereafter a the stars for ever and ever."

So much for the state of my heart; as to my spirits, I a cheerful and happy, and having peace with God have pea within myself. For the continuance of this blessing I trust t Him who gives it: and they who trust in Him shall never b confounded. Yours affectionately, W. C.

Huntingdon, at the Rev. Mr. Unwin's,
March 12, 1766.

TO MRS. COWPER, AT THE PARK HOUSE, HARTFORD.

MY DEAR COUSIN, April 4, 1766.

I AGREE with you that letters are not essential to friendship: but they seem to be a natural fruit of it, when they are the only intercourse that can be had. And a friendship producing no sensible effects is so like indifference, that the appearance may easily deceive even an acute discerner. I retract however all that I said in my last upon this subject, having reason to suspect that it proceeded from a principle which I would discourage in myself upon all occasions, even a pride that felt itself hurt upon a mere suspicion of neglect. I have so much cause for humility, and so much need of it too, and every little sneaking resentment is such an enemy to it, that I hope I shall never give quarter to any thing that appears in the shape of sullenness, or self-consequence hereafter. Alas! if my best Friend, who laid down His life for me, were to remember all the instances in which I have neglected Him, and to plead them against me in judgement, where should I hide my guilty head in the day of recompense? I will pray therefore for blessings upon my friends even though they cease to be so, and upon my enemies though they continue such. The deceitfulness of the natural heart is inconceivable. I know well that I passed upon my friends for a person at least religiously inclined, if not actually religious; and what is more wonderful, I thought myself a Christian, when I had no faith in Christ, when I saw no beauty in him that I should desire him; in short, when I had neither faith nor love, nor any Christian grace whatever, but a thousand seeds of rebellion instead, evermore springing up in enmity against him. But blessed be God, even the God who is become my salvation, the hail of affliction, and rebuke for sin has swept away the refuge of lies. It pleased the Almighty in great mercy to set all my misdeeds before me. At length, the storm being past, a quiet and peaceful serenity of soul succeeded, such as ever attends the gift of lively faith in the all-sufficient atonement, and the sweet sense of mercy and pardon purchased by the blood of Christ. Thus did He break me and bind me up; thus did he wound me, and his hands made me whole. My dear cousin, I make no apology for entertaining you with the history of my conversion, because I know you to be a Christian in the sterling import.

of the appellation. This is, however, but a very summary account of the matter, neither would a letter contain the astonishing particulars of it. If we ever meet again in this world, I will relate them to you by word of mouth; if not, they will serve for the subject of a conference in the next, where I doubt not I shall remember and record them with a gratitude better suited to the subject.

Yours, my dear cousin, affectionately, W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER, AT THE PARK HOUSE, HARTFORD.

MY DEAR COUSIN, April 17, 1766.

As in matters unattainable by reason, and unrevealed in the Scripture, it is impossible to argue at all; so, in matters concerning which reason can only give a probable guess, and the Scripture has made no explicit discovery, it is, though not impossible to argue at all, yet impossible to argue to any certain conclusion. This seems to me to be the very case with the point in question: reason is able to form many plausible conjectures concerning the possibility of our knowing each other in a future state; and the Scripture has, here and there, favoured us with an expression that looks at least like a slight intimation of it; but because a conjecture can never amount to a proof, and a slight intimation cannot be construed into a positive assertion, therefore I think we can never come to any absolute conclusion upon the subject. We may indeed reason about the plausibility of our conjectures, and we may discuss, with great industry and shrewdness of argument, those passages in the Scripture which seem to favour the opinion; but still, no certain means having been afforded us, no certain end can be attained; and after all that can be said, it will still be doubtful whether we shall know each other or not.

As to arguments founded upon human reason only, it would be easy to muster up a much greater number on the affirmative side of the question, than it would be worth my while to write, or yours to read. Let us see, therefore, what the Scripture says, or seems to say, towards the proof of it; and of this kind of argument also I shall insert but a few of those which seem to me to be the fairest and clearest for the purpose. For after all, a disputant on either side of this question is in danger of that censure of our blessed Lord's, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scripture, nor the power of God."

parables, I know it has been said, in the dispute con-
the intermediate state, that they are not argumenta-
this having been controverted by very wise and good
the parable of Dives and Lazarus having been used
o prove an intermediate state, I see not why it may not
rly used for the proof of any other matter which it
rly to imply. In this parable we see that Dives is
ed as knowing Lazarus, and Abraham as knowing
h, and the discourse between them is entirely concern-
respective characters and circumstances upon earth.
refore, our Saviour seems to countenance the notion of
knowledge and recollection; and if a soul that has
shall know the soul that is saved, surely the heirs of
shall know and recollect each other.

first epistle to the Thessalonians, the second chapter,
eenth verse, St. Paul says, "What is our hope, or
own of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence
ord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our
joy."

he hope which the Apostle has formed concerning
himself refers the accomplishment of it to the coming
, meaning that then he should receive the recom-
his labours in their behalf; his joy and glory he
ewise to the same period, both which would result
sight of such numbers redeemed by the blessing of
his ministration, when he should present them be-
great Judge, and say, in the words of a greater than
'Lo! I, and the children whom thou hast given me."
s to imply that the Apostle should know the converts,
onverts the Apostle, at least at the Day of Judge-
d if then, why not afterwards?

o the fourth chapter of that epistle, verses 13, 14,
I have not room to transcribe. Here the Apostle
them under their affliction for their deceased brethren,
them "not to sorrow as without hope;" and what
pe by which he teaches them to support their spirits?
s, "that them which sleep in Jesus shall God bring
." In other words, and by a fair paraphrase surely,
m they are only taken from them for a season, and
should receive them at their resurrection.

can take off the force of these texts, my dear cousin,

you will go a great way towards shaking my opinion; if not, I think they must go a great way towards shaking yours.

The reason why I did not send you my opinion of Pearsall was, because I had not then read him; I have read him since, and like him much, especially the latter part of him; but you have whetted my curiosity to see the last letter by tearing it out: unless you can give me a good reason why I should not see it, I shall inquire for the book the first time I go to Cambridge. Perhaps I may be partial to Hervey for the sake of his other writings; but I cannot give Pearsall the preference to him, for I think him one of the most scriptural writers in the world. Yours, W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER, AT THE PARK HOUSE, HARTFORD.

MY DEAR COUSIN, April 18, 1766.

HAVING gone as far as I thought needful to justify the opinion of our meeting and knowing each other hereafter, I find, upon reflection, that I have done but half my business, and that one of the questions you proposed remains entirely unconsidered, viz. "Whether the things of our present state will not be of too low and mean a nature to engage our thoughts, or make a part of our communications in heaven."

The common and ordinary occurrences of life, no doubt, and even the ties of kindred, and of all temporal interests, will be entirely discarded from amongst that happy society; and possibly even the remembrance of them done away. But it does not therefore follow that our spiritual concerns, even in this life, will be forgotten; neither do I think that they can ever appear trifling to us in any the most distant period of eternity. God, as you say in reference to the Scripture, will be all in all. But does not that expression mean that, being admitted to so near an aproach to our heavenly Father and Redeemer, our whole nature, the soul and all its faculties, will be employed in praising and adoring him? Doubtless, however, this will be the case; and if so, will it not furnish out a glorious theme of thanksgiving, to recollect "the rock whence we were hewn, and the hole of the pit whence we were digged?" to recollect the time when our faith, which under the tuition and nurture of the Holy Spirit has produced such a plentiful harvest of immortal bliss, was as a grain of mustard seed, small in itself, *promising* but little fruit, and producing less? to recollect the

various attempts that were made upon it, by the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, and its various triumphs over all, by the assistance of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ? At present, whatever our convictions may be of the sinfulness and corruption of our nature, we can make but a very imperfect estimate either of our weakness or our guilt. Then, no doubt, we shall understand the full value of the wonderful salvation wrought out for us: and it seems reasonable to suppose, that, in order to form a just idea of our redemption, we shall be able to form a just one of the danger we have escaped; when we know how weak and frail we were, surely we shall be more able to render due praise and honour to His strength who fought for us; when we know completely the hatefulness of sin in the sight of God, and how deeply we were tainted by it, we shall know how to value the blood by which we were cleansed as we ought. The twenty-four elders, in the fifth of the Revelations, give glory to God for their redemption out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. This surely implies a retrospect to their respective conditions upon earth, and that each remembered out of what particular kindred and nation he had been redeemed; and if so, then surely the minutest circumstance of their redemption did not escape their memory. They who triumph over the Beast, in the fifteenth chapter, sing the song of Moses, the servant of God; and what was that song? A sublime record of Israel's deliverance and the destruction of her enemies in the Red Sea, typical no doubt of the song which the redeemed in Sion shall sing to celebrate their own salvation, and the defeat of their spiritual enemies. This, again, implies a recollection of the dangers they had before encountered, and the supplies of strength and ardour they had in every emergency received from the great deliverer out of all. These quotations do not indeed prove that their warfare upon earth includes a part of their converse with each other; but they prove that it is a theme not unworthy to be heard even before the throne of God, and therefore it cannot be unfit for reciprocal communication.

But you doubt whether there is *any* communication between the blessed at all; neither do I recollect any Scripture that proves it, or that bears any relation to the subject. But reason seems to require it so peremptorily, that a society without

social intercourse seems to be a solecism, and a contradiction in terms; and the inhabitants of those regions are called, you know, in Scripture, an innumerable *company*, and an *assembly*, which seems to convey the idea of society as clearly as the world itself. Human testimony weighs but little in matters of this sort, but let it have all the weight it can: I know no greater names in divinity than Watts and Doddridge; they were both of this opinion, and I send you the words of the latter:—

"Our *companions in glory* may probably assist us by their wise and good observations, when we come to make the *Providence of God*, here upon earth, under the guidance and direction of our Lord Jesus Christ, the *subject of our mutual converse*."

Thus, my dear cousin, I have spread out my reasons before you for an opinion which, whether admitted or denied, affects not the state or interest of our soul. May our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, conduct us into his own Jerusalem; where there shall be no night, neither any darkness at all; where we shall be free even from innocent error, and perfect in the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Yours faithfully, W. C.

TO MR. JOSEPH HILL,

AT THE CHANCERY OFFICE, LONDON, OR IN COOKE'S COURT, CAREY STREET, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS.

If not at either of the above places, to be forwarded to him immediately.

DEAR SEPHUS, Aug. 16, 1766.

UNCERTAIN whether or no this will ever reach your hands, I shall lay an embargo upon all that wit and humour which generally pours itself out in my epistles, and only write the needful.

I have a bill to pay here, and immediate occasion for cash besides. Twenty pounds will answer both these emergencies. I should be glad, therefore, if my finances will stretch so far, of a bank note by the first opportunity to that amount.

I am much concerned to hear of Ashley's illness. You will oblige me by sending me some account of him.

Yours, dear Joe, W^M^. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR SEPHUS. No date.

I SENT you a scrap this morning, but the post not being yet

gone out, I shall trouble you with another scrap, upon the subject of yours which I have just received.

I am sorry my finances are not only exhausted, but overdrawn. This being the case I shall choose to let the draper's bill at this place remain unpaid a while longer, till cash comes in. I shall lower my demands therefore, and, instead of twenty pounds, must beg of you to convey to me five guineas for immediate use. My brother is gone into the North, with no more money than he wants, and will return I suppose, wanting more than he has. I thought he had made out our account with Eamonson, for I charged him by letter, just before he set out for London, not to forget it.

These deficiencies of money frighten me, lest I should not be able to continue in this comfortable retreat, for I shall never, I doubt, find such another. Another half-year will be due to Mr. Unwin in November, which must be paid him at the time, if I sell the only hundred I have for the purpose. I was always good at selling. It has, as you say, been an expensive year: I shall hope better things of the next.

I rejoice with you in the snugness of your situation, and if you continue to like it, wish you may always continue to be in the same or just such another.

My love attends your family. Yours, dear Joe,

WM. COWPER.

TO MRS. COWPER, AT THE PARK HOUSE, HARTFORD.

MY DEAR COUSIN, Huntingdon, Sept. 3, 1766.

It is reckoned, you know, a great achievement to silence an opponent in disputation; and your silence was of so long a continuance, that I might well begin to please myself with the apprehension of having accomplished so arduous a matter. To be serious, however, I am not sorry that what I have said concerning our knowledge of each other in a future state, has a little inclined you to the affirmative. For though the redeemed of the Lord shall be sure of being as happy in that state as infinite power, employed by infinite goodness, can make them, and therefore it may seem immaterial whether we shall, or shall not recollect each other hereafter, yet our present happiness at least is a little interested in the question. A parent, a friend, a wife, must needs, I think, feel a little heartache at the thought of an eternal separation from the objects of her

regard; and not to know them, when she meets them in a
life, or never to meet them at all, amounts, though no
gether, yet nearly to the same thing. Remember t
think she needs must. To hear that they are happy w
deed be no small addition to her own felicity; but to se
so, will surely be a greater. Thus at least it appears
present human apprehension; consequently, therefo
think that when we leave them, we lose them for eve
we must remain eternally ignorant whether they, that wer
of our flesh, and bone of our bone, partake with us of c
glory, or are disinherited of their heavenly portion, mu
a dismal gloom over all our present connexions. For n
part, this life is such a momentary thing, and all its in
have so shrunk in my estimation, since by the grace
Lord Jesus Christ I became attentive to the things of a
that, like a worm in the bud of all my friendships and affe
this very thought would eat out the heart of them all, h
thousand; and were their date to terminate with this
think I should have no inclination to cultivate and in
such a fugitive business. Yet friendship is necessary
happiness here; and built upon Christian principles
which only it can stand, is a thing even of religious sanct
for what is that love which the Holy Spirit, speaking
John, so much inculcates, but friendship? the only love
deserves the name; a love which can toil, and watch, an
itself, and go to death for its brother. Worldly frien
are a poor weed compared with this; and even this un
spirit in the bond of peace would suffer, in my mind at
could I think it were only coeval with our earthly ma
It may possibly argue great weakness in me, in this in
to stand so much in need of future hopes to support me
discharge of present duty. But so it is:—I am far, I
very far from being perfect in Christian love, or any
divine attainment, and am therefore unwilling to forego
ever may help me in my progress.

Your are so kind as to inquire after my health, for
reason I must tell you, what otherwise would not be
mentioning, that I have lately been just enough indispo
convince me that not only human life in general, but m
particular, hangs by a slender thread. I am stout e
in appearance, yet a little illness demolishes me. I ha

a severe shake, and the building is not so firm as it was. But I bless God for it with all my heart. If the inner man be but strengthened day by day, as, I hope, under the renewing influences of the Holy Ghost it will be, no matter how soon the outward is dissolved. He who has in a manner raised me from the dead, in a literal sense, has given me the grace, I trust, to be ready at the shortest notice to surrender up to him that life which I have twice received from him. Whether I live or die, I desire it may be to His glory, and it must be to my happiness. I thank God that I have those amongst my kindred to whom I can write without reserve my sentiments upon this subject, as I do to you. A letter upon any other subject is more insipid to me than ever my task was when a schoolboy; and I say not this in vain glory, God forbid! but to show you what the Almighty, whose name I am unworthy to mention, has done for me, the chief of sinners. Once he was a terror to me, and his service, oh what a weariness it was! Now I can say I love him, and his holy name, and I am never so happy as when I speak of his mercies to me.

Your's, dear cousin, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, Oct. 9, 1766.

It would be rather an unreasonable proceeding methinks, to trouble you so frequently as I do with my paltry affairs, and by way of recompense to make use of your money without remembering to restore it. That I may act therefore more in character as a reasonable being, I desire you will be so kind as to send me a letter of attorney to empower you to sell as much of the hundred pounds as my arrears with you amount to. Mr. Unwin's forty guineas will be due on the eleventh of November. If my treasury has been sufficiently replenished to answer that demand, or is likely to be so before the time mentioned, well and good. If not, I must beg you to dispatch the whole hundred pounds, that the money may be forthcoming. My draper's bill, amounting to about fourteen pounds, I shall endeavour to discharge out of my right breeches pocket, which I hope will be rich enough for the purpose.

My brother is returned from Yorkshire, and will send you a copy of our account with Eamonson. He thought he had given you one when he saw you in town, having written it out

for that purpose; but certainly forgot it, as he did his great coat, which he has left at an inn upon the north road, besides having with the same noble contempt of wealth and self-interest, accepted half a moidore from an innkeeper, made of tin, and not worth a penny. I laugh at his carelessness, and so does he. Whether laughing at it be the way to cure it, time will show.

I direct this to your office lest it should not find you at Taplow. My love to your family, and believe me ever yours,

W^M^. COWPER.

TO MRS. COWPER, AT THE PARK HOUSE, HARTFORD.

MY DEAR COUSIN, Huntingdon, Oct. 20, 1766.

I AM very sorry for poor Charles's illness, and hope you will soon have cause to thank God for his complete recovery. We have an epidemical fever in this country likewise, which leaves behind it a continual sighing, almost to suffocation; not that I have seen any instance of it, for, blessed be God! our family have hitherto escaped it, but such was the account I heard of it this morning.

I am obliged to you for the interest you take in my welfare, and for your inquiring so particularly after the manner in which my time passes here. As to amusements, I mean what the world calls such, we have none; the place indeed swarms with them, and cards and dancing are the professed business of almost all the *gentle* inhabitants of Huntingdon. We refuse to take part in them, or to be accessaries to this way of murdering our time, and by so doing have acquired the name of Methodists. Having told you how we *do not* spend our time, I will next say how we do. We breakfast commonly between eight and nine; till eleven, we read either the Scripture, or the sermons of some faithful preacher of those holy mysteries; at eleven we attend divine service, which is performed here twice every day; and from twelve to three we separate and amuse ourselves as we please. During that interval I either read in my own apartment, or walk, or ride, or work in the garden. We seldom sit an hour after dinner, but if the weather permits adjourn to the garden, where with Mrs. Unwin and her son I have generally the pleasure of religious conversation till tea-time. If it rains, or is too windy for walking, we either converse within doors, or sing some hymns of Mar-

[illegible] make up a [illegible] [illegible] best and most [illegible] [illegible] walk in good [illegible]. [illegible] have generally [illegible] [illegible] again. When the [illegible] the former part of the [illegible] At night we [illegible] and commonly [illegible] and last of all the family are called to [illegible] tell you, that such a life as this is consistent with the almost cheerfulness; accordingly we are all happy, and dwell together in unity as brethren. Mrs. [illegible] has almost a maternal affection for me, and I have something very like a filial one for her, and her son and I are brothers. Blessed be the God of our salvation for such companions, and for such a life; above all, for a heart to like it.

I have had many anxious thoughts about taking orders, and I believe every new convert is apt to think himself called upon for that purpose; but it has pleased God, by means which there is no need to particularize, to give me full satisfaction as to the propriety of declining it; indeed, they who have the least idea of what I have suffered from the dread of public exhibitions, will readily excuse my never attempting them hereafter. In the meantime, if it please the Almighty, I may be an instrument of turning many to the truth in a private way, and I hope that my endeavours in this way have not been entirely unsuccessful. Had I the zeal of Moses, I should want an Aaron to be my spokesman.

Yours ever, my dear cousin, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR SEPHUS, Oct. 27, 1766.

If every dealer and chapman was connected with creditors like you, the poor commissioners of bankrupts would be ruined. I can only wonder at you, considering my knack at running in debt, and my slender ability to pay. After all, I am afraid that the poor stock must suffer. When I wrote my last, the payment of my boy's board was farther distant, therefore I suppose it was that I did not mention it. Mr. Peacock's bill too being a growing evil, though at that time I thought of

paying it out of my pocket, must I find receive its satisfaction from another quarter. The former of these demands amounts to about six pounds, and the latter to about sixteen, and has waited so long for payment that in a little time my credit and interest in that gentleman will begin to totter. My finances will never be able to satisfy these craving necessities, without leaving my debt to you entirely unsatisfied. And though I know you are sincere in what you say, and as willing to wait for your money as heart can wish, yet *quære*, whether the next half year, which will bring its expenses with it, will be more propitious to you than the present? The succeeding half years may bear a close resemblance to their insolvent predecessors continually; and unless we break bank some time or other, your proposal of payment may be always what it is at present. What matters it, therefore, to reprieve the stock, which must come to execution at last?

I am heartily glad my uncle[1] has recovered his spirits; and desire you will remember me to all your associates at Taplow. I sympathise with you upon the fugitive nature of the longest vacation, and wish, for your sake, that the chancellor would pack up his great seal, and hold his court in your neighbourhood. Yours ever, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR SEPHUS, Nov. 12, 1766.

I DREW yesterday for Mr. Unwin's money, and when I have drawn about six pounds more for the young gentleman's maintenance whose birth and parentage you enquire after, I shall have drawn my last for the present.

He is the son of a drunken cobbler at St. Alban's who would probably have starved him to death by this time, or have poisoned him with gin, if Providence had not thrown him in my way to rescue him. I was glad of an opportunity to show some mercy in a place where I had received so much; and hope God will give a blessing to my endeavours to preserve him. He is a fine boy, of a good temper and understanding; and if the notice that is taken of him by the neighbourhood do not spoil him, will probably turn out well: for further particulars enquire of Dr. Cotton.

At present I have thoughts of dealing with him much after the same manner, when he is a year or two older, as with my

[1] Ashley Cowper, Esq.

present servant. He will be about nine years of age when my man leaves me; at which time I think of taking him into my service, for he will be old enough to do all the business for which I shall want him, and of a right age to be taught the trade and mystery of a breeches-maker. This, though not so cheap a way as keeping no servant, will yet be a considerable saving to me, for I shall have but one to maintain instead of two, and in the mean time an advantage will result from it, not to be overlooked, the securing him, I mean, from ill examples and bad company, which, if I turn him quite loose into another family, cannot be so easily done. But after all, my measures in this instance, and in all others, are precarious things, because my income is so. But God will order all for the best.

I am sorry my uncle's disorder still hangs about him. The grief of a wounded spirit is of all the most dreadful. Give my sincere love to your family and all my friends, and believe me, dear Joe,

Your's very affectionately, W^M. COWPER.

TO MRS. COWPER.

MY DEAR COUSIN, March 11, 1767.

To find those whom I love, clearly and strongly persuaded of evangelical truth, gives me a pleasure superior to any that this world can afford me. Judge then, whether your letter, in which the body and substance of a saving faith is so evidently set forth, could meet with a lukewarm reception at my hands, or be entertained with indifference! Would you know the true reason of my long silence? Conscious that my religious principles are generally excepted against, and that the conduct they produce, wherever they are heartily maintained, is still more the object of disapprobation than those principles themselves; and remembering that I had made both the one and the other known to you, without having any clear assurance that our faith in Jesus was of the same stamp and character, I could not help thinking it possible that you might disapprove both my sentiments and practice; that you might think the one unsupported by Scripture, and the other whimsical and unnecessarily strict and rigorous, and consequently would be rather pleased with the suspension of a correspondence, which a different way of thinking upon so momentous

a subject as that we wrote upon, was likely to render tedious and irksome to you.

I have told you the truth from my heart; forgive me these injurious suspicions, and never imagine that I shall hear from you upon this delightful theme without a real joy, or without prayer to God to prosper you in the way of his truth,—his sanctifying and saving truth. The book you mention lies now upon my table. Marshall is an old acquaintance of mine: I have both read him and heard him read with pleasure and edification. The doctrines he maintains are, under the influence of the spirit of Christ, the very life of my soul, and the soul of all my happiness: that Jesus is a *present* Saviour from the guilt of sin by his most precious blood, and from the power of it by his Spirit; that corrupt and wretched in ourselves, in him, and in *him only*, we are complete; that being united to Jesus by a lively faith, we have a solid and eternal interest in his obedience and sufferings, to justify us before the face of our heavenly Father; and that all this inestimable treasure, the earnest of which is in grace, and its consummation in glory, is given, freely *given* to us of God; in short, that he hath opened the kingdom of heaven *to all believers*. These are the truths which, by the grace of God, shall ever be dearer to me than life itself; shall ever be placed next my heart, as the throne whereon the Saviour himself shall sit, to sway all its motions, and reduce that world of iniquity and rebellion to a state of filial and affectionate obedience to the will of the most Holy.

These, my dear cousin, are the truths, to which by nature we are enemies. They debase the sinner, and exalt the Saviour, to a degree which the pride of our hearts, (till Almighty grace subdues them,) is determined never to allow. May the Almighty reveal his Son in our hearts continually more and more, and teach us to increase in love towards him continually, for having *given* us the unspeakable riches of Christ!

Yours faithfully, W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

MY DEAR COUSIN, March 14, 1767.

I JUST add a line by way of postscript to my last, to apprize you of the arrival of a very dear friend of mine at the Park on Friday next, the son of Mr. Unwin, whom I have desired to call on you, in his way from London to Huntingdon. If you

knew him as well as I do, you would love him as much. But I leave the young man to speak for himself, which he is very able to do. He is ready possessed of an answer to every question you can possibly ask concerning me, and knows my *whole story* from first to last. I give you this previous notice, because I know you are not fond of strange faces, and because I thought it would in some degree save him the pain of announcing himself.

I am become a great florist, and shrub-doctor. If the Major can make up a small packet of seeds, that will make a figure in a garden, where we have little else besides jessamine and honey-suckle; such a packet I mean as may be put in one's fob, I will promise to take great care of them, as I ought to value natives of the Park. They must not be such however as require great skill in the management, for at present I have no skill to spare.

I think Marshall one of the best writers, and the most spiritual expositor of Scripture, I ever read. I admire the strength of his argument, and the clearness of his reasonings, upon those parts of our most holy religion which are generally least understood, (even by real Christians,) as masterpieces of the kind. His section upon the union of the soul with Christ is an instance of what I mean, in which he has spoken of a most mysterious truth with admirable perspicuity, and with great good sense, making it all the while subservient to his main purport of proving holiness to be the fruit and effect of faith.

I subjoin thus much upon that author, because, though you desired my opinion of him, I remember that in my last I rather left you to find it out by inference, than expressed it as I ought to have done. I never met with a man who understood the plan of salvation better, or was more happy in explaining it. W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER, AT THE PARK HOUSE, HARTFORD.

MY DEAR COUSIN, Huntingdon, April 3, 1767.

You sent my friend Unwin home to us charmed with your kind reception of him, and with every thing he saw at the Park. Shall I once more give you a peep into my vile and deceitful heart? What motive do you think lay at the bottom of my conduct when I desired him to call upon you? I did not suspect at first that pride and vain glory had any share in it; but

quickly after I had recommended the visit to him, I discovered in that fruitful soil the very root of the matter. You know I am a stranger here; all such are suspected characters, unless they bring their credentials with them. To this moment, I believe, it is matter of speculation in the place, whence I came, and to whom I belong.

Though my friend, you may suppose, before I was admitted an inmate here, was satisfied that I was not a mere vagabond, and has since that time received more convincing proofs of my *sponsibility*, yet I could not resist the opportunity of furnishing him with ocular demonstration of it, by introducing him to one of my most splendid connexions; that when he hears me called "*That fellow Cowper*," which has happened heretofore, he may be able, upon unquestionable evidence, to assert my gentlemanhood, and relieve me from the weight of that opprobrious appellation. Oh pride! pride! it deceives with the subtlety of a serpent, and seems to walk erect, though it crawls upon the earth. How will it twist and twine itself about, to get from under the Cross, which it is the glory of our Christian calling to be able to bear with patience and good will. They who can guess at the heart of a stranger, and you especially, who are of a compassionate temper, will be more ready, perhaps, to excuse me in this instance, than I can be to excuse myself. But in good truth it was abominable pride of heart, indignation, and vanity, and deserves no better name. How should such a creature be admitted into those pure and sinless mansions, where nothing shall enter that defileth, did not the blood of Christ, applied by the hand of faith, take away the guilt of sin, and leave no spot or stain behind it? Oh what continual need have I of an Almighty, All-sufficient Saviour! I am glad you are acquainted so *particularly* with *all* the circumstances of my story, for I know that your secrecy and discretion may be trusted with any thing. A thread of mercy ran through all the intricate maze of those afflictive providences, so mysterious to myself at the time, and which must ever remain so to all, who will not see what was the great design of them; at the judgement-seat of Christ the whole shall be laid open. How is the rod of iron changed into a sceptre of love!

I thank you for the seeds; I have committed some of each sort to the ground, whence they will soon spring up like so *many* mementos to remind me of my friends at the Park.

W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, May 14, 1767.

I ONLY know that I was once the happy owner of a red-leather trunk, and that my brother, when I first saw him at Cambridge, upon my enquiring after my papers, &c., told me that in a red-leather trunk they were all safely deposited. The whole contents of it are little worth, and if I never see them more, I shall be but very moderately afflicted by the loss, though I fancy the trunk upon the road will prove to be the very trunk in question.

Together with your letter came a bill from my quondam hosier, in Fleet Street, Mr. Reynolds, for the sum of two pounds ten shillings, desiring present payment, cash being scarce. I sent him an order for the money by this day's post. My future expenses in the hosiery way will be small, for Mrs. Unwin knits all my stockings, and would knit my hats too, if that were possible.

I imagine my brother will be in town about midsummer, when he will be able to confer with you upon the subject of the inexorable Mr. E——, more to the purpose than I can by letter.

Having commenced gardener, I study the arts of pruning, sowing, and planting; and enterprise every thing in that way, from melons down to cabbages. I have a large garden to display my abilities in, and, were we twenty miles nearer London, I might turn higgler, and serve your honour with cauliflowers, and brocoli, at the best hand. I shall possibly now and then desire you to call at the seed-shop, in your way to Westminster, though sparingly. Should I do it often, you would begin to think you had a mother-in-law at Berkhampstead.

Yours, dear Joe, W^M^. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, June 16, 1767.

THIS part of the world is not productive of much news, unless the coldness of the weather be so, which is excessive for the season. We expect, or rather experience a warm contest between the candidates for the county: the preliminary movements of bribery, threatening, and drunkenness, being already taken. The Sandwich interest seems to shake, though both parties are very sanguine. Lord Carysfort is supposed to be

in great jeopardy, though as yet, I imagine, a clear judgement cannot be formed; for a man may have all the noise on his side, and yet lose his election. You know me to be an uninterested person, and I am sure I am a very ignorant one in things of this kind. I only wish it was over, for it occasions the most detestable scene of profligacy and riot that can be imagined. Yours ever, WM. COWPER.

TO MRS. COWPER, AT THE PARK HOUSE, HARTFORD.

MY DEAR COUSIN, Huntingdon, July 13, 1767.

THE newspaper has told you the truth. Poor Mr. Unwin being flung from his horse, as he was going to the church on Sunday morning, received a dreadful fracture on the back part of the skull, under which he languished till Thursday evening, and then died. This awful dispensation has left an impression upon our spirits, which will not presently be worn off. He died in a poor cottage, to which he was carried immediately after his fall about a mile from home; and his body could not be brought to his house till the spirit was gone to Him who gave it. May it be a lesson to us to watch, since we know not the day nor the hour when our Lord cometh!

The effect of it upon my circumstances will only be a change of the place of my abode. For I shall still, by God's leave, continue with Mrs. Unwin, whose behaviour to me has always been that of a mother to a son. We know not yet where we shall settle, but we trust that the Lord, whom we seek, will go before us, and prepare a rest for us. We have employed our friend Haweis, Dr. Conyers of Helmsley in Yorkshire, and Mr. Newton of Olney, to look out a place for us, but at present are entirely ignorant under which of the three we shall settle, or whether under either. I have written to my Aunt Madan, to desire Martin to assist us with his enquiries. It is probable we shall stay here till Michaelmas. W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, Huntingdon, July 16, 1767.

YOUR wishes that the newspapers may have misinformed you are vain. Mr. Unwin is dead, and died in the manner there mentioned. At nine o'clock on Sunday morning he was in perfect health, and as likely to live twenty years as either of us; and before ten was stretched speechless and senseless upon

a flock bed, in a poor cottage, where (it being impossible to remove him) he died on Thursday evening. I heard his dying groans, the effect of great agony, for he was a strong man, and much convulsed in his last moments. The few short intervals of sense that were indulged him he spent in earnest prayer, and in expressions of a firm trust and confidence in the only Saviour. To that strong hold we must all resort at last, if we would have hope in our death; when every other refuge fails, we are glad to fly to the only shelter, to which we can repair to any purpose; and happy is it for us when, the false ground we have chosen for ourselves being broken under us, we find ourselves obliged to have recourse to the rock which can never be shaken. When this is our lot, we receive great and undeserved mercy.

Our society will not break up, but we shall settle in some other place; where, is at present uncertain.

Yours, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR JOE, Olney, Sept. 21, 1767.

I RETURN you thanks for your information in the law matter, and shall be obliged to you for further assurances when you can consult your authorities.

Many more thanks are due to you for the tender and friendly manner in which you bring me acquainted with the distress that attends my circumstances. I beg, my friend, that you will no longer make any objection to the sale of the hundred pounds. I cannot be easy till that is done; my peace of mind is concerned in it. Not because I suspect you of the least anxiety about payment, but because I abhor the thought of trespassing upon the goodness of a faithful friend. My brother has a letter of attorney already to empower him to receive the interest; but I believe it extends no further. Send me one therefore to empower you to sell the principal, and I shall be easy: as to any future exigencies I am entirely so. My expenses hereafter will be so much reduced in some capital articles, that I have not the least remaining doubt but that the income of my future years will be much more than sufficient for the demands of them. I might say something of this sort before, perhaps unadvisedly, and the event proves it to have been so; but now I say it upon good warrant, and cannot be mistaken.

I could wish, if it can be so managed, that the sale of the stock might be kept secret from my family, because it would probably alarm their fears upon my account, and possibly once more awaken their resentment. But the Lord's will be done, whatever it be. If they must know it, you will do me the kindness to assure them from me, that I have taken such order about my circumstances as that there can be no danger of exceeding them hereafter. Only I beg to be excused descending to particulars. Once more I entreat it as a favour, and shall consider it as a new proof of your attention to my happiness, that you will consent to the sale of the stock, and take measures for that purpose immediately. It cannot possibly be an inconvenience to me, nor can I possibly in any emergency whatever, make a better use of it.

My love to your mother and sisters.

Yours ever, WM. COWPER[1].

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, Olney, Oct. 10, 1767.

I AM obliged to you for complying with my request, and shall be glad to have the matter expedited as fast as may be.

One more law question; and I believe the last,—A man holds lands in right of his wife, the rents payable half-yearly, viz. at Lady-day, and Michaelmas; dies in July. Are not the rising rents the property of the widow? I mean, the rent of the whole last half-year. You are a better counsellor than I was, but I think you have much such a client in me, as I had in Dick Harcourt. Much good may do you with me!

Neither have I any map to consult, at present, but by what remembrance I have of the situation of this place in the last I saw, it lies at the northernmost point of the county. We are just five miles beyond Newport Pagnell. I am willing to suspect that you make this enquiry with a *view* to an *interview*, when time shall serve. We may possibly be settled in our own house in about a month, where so good a friend of mine will be extremely welcome to Mrs. Unwin. We shall have a

[1] On the back of this letter Lady Hesketh writes:—"This letter actually makes my heart bleed! Oh what must have been the sensations of such a heart as his while writing it! I don't know whether I could be *cruel* enough to wish Lord T. to see this and some others of this parcel. But surely he could not see *such* letters from *such* a friend without a degree of remorse that I could not wish to my greatest enemy."

bed, and a warm fire-side, at your service, if you can come before next summer; and if not, a parlour that looks the north wind full in the face, where you may be as cool as in the groves of Valombrosa.

Yours, my dear Sephus,
affectionately ever, W^M^. COWPER.

P.S. The stock is in the three per cent. consols. You may send the letter of attorney by the waggon from the George in Smithfield. It sets out on Tuesday morning early. But upon recollection, it had better come by the post.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, Olney, Nov. 10, 1767.

INCLOSED you have the letter of attorney. I shall be glad if you will find an opportunity of sending me six guineas, in a parcel by the Olney waggon, which sets out from the George in Smithfield early on Tuesday morning, therefore it must be sent to the inn on Monday night.

It seems to me, though it did not occur to me at first, that you may be drawn into circumstances disagreeable to your delicacy by being laid under the restraint of secrecy with respect to the sale of this money. I desire therefore that if any questions are asked about the manner in which my arrears to you have been discharged, you will declare it at once.

* * * * * *

Yours sincerely, W^M^. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR SEPHUS, Jan. 21, 1768.

THE notes arrived safe last night. We rejoice that the venison proved good. Pray send me word in your next whether Grainger the tailor is dead or alive. So much for the needful. You are always busy, and I am just going to be so, which will make brevity and conciseness convenient to us both.

Yours faithfully and truly, W^M^. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, May 3, 1768.

I SHALL be obliged to you if you will send me a ten pound note by the first opportunity, and at the same time I shall be glad to be informed of the state of my finances. The last time I wrote I begged you would be so good as to tell me

whether Grainger is to be found above ground or no; if he is, whether he lives where he did, or has changed his dwelling; and if not, where his executors, administrators or assigns, are to be met with. You will oblige me too, and so will your little tiney mother, if you will favour me with Mrs. Rebecca Cowper's receipt to pickle cabbage. My respects wait on her and your sisters, viz. your mother, not mine. You will ascribe my dryness and conciseness in the epistolary way to almost a total disuse of my pen. My youth and my scribbling vein are gone together, and unless they had been better employed it is fit they should.

Yours affectionately, W^M^. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, Olney, May 7, 1768.

THANKS for the receipt and for the note. When you come this way next, I hope your business will not be so impatient. We can show you a beautiful country, though not much celebrated in song, and a fine long town, pretty clean in summertime and full of poor folks. My love to Mrs. Doe, and thanks for the exercise of her transcribing abilities, not forgetting the rest of your household.

I shall want to draw for eighty pounds next month, and intend to leave the remainder by way of nest egg.

Yours affectionately, W^M^. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, Olney, June 16, 1768.

I THANK you for so full an answer to so empty an epistle. If Olney furnished any thing for your amusement, you should have it in return; but occurrences here are as scarce as cucumbers at Christmas.

I visited St. Alban's about a fortnight since in person, and I visit it every day in thought. The recollection of what passed there and the consequences that followed it, fill my mind continually, and make the circumstances of a poor transient half-spent life so insipid and unaffecting, that I have no heart to think or write much about them. Whether the nation is worshiping Mr. Wilkes or any other idol, is of little moment to one who hopes and believes that he shall shortly stand in the presence of the great and blessed God. I thank him, that he has given me such a deep impressed persuasion of this awful

truth, as a thousand worlds would not purchase from me. It gives a relish to every blessing, and makes every trouble light.

Affectionately yours, W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

MY DEAR COUSIN,

I HAVE not been behind hand in reproaching myself with neglect, but desire to take shame to myself for my unprofitableness in this, as well as in all other respects. I take the next immediate opportunity however of thanking you for yours, and of assuring you that, instead of being surprised at your silence, I rather wonder that you, or any of my friends, have any room left for so careless and negligent a correspondent in your memories. I am obliged to you for the intelligence you send me of my kindred, and rejoice to hear of their welfare. He who settles the bounds of our habitations has at length cast our lot at a great distance from each other; but I do not therefore forget their former kindness to me, or cease to be interested in their well being. You live in the centre of a world I know you do not delight in. Happy are you, my dear friend, in being able to discern the insufficiency of all it can afford to fill and satisfy the desires of an immortal soul. That God who created us for the enjoyment of himself has determined in mercy that it shall fail us here, in order that the blessed result of all our enquiries after happiness in the creature may be a warm pursuit and a close attachment to our true interests, in fellowship and communion with Him, through the name and mediation of a dear Redeemer. I bless his goodness and grace, that I have any reason to hope I am a partaker with you in the desire after better things than are to be found in a world polluted with sin, and therefore devoted to destruction. May He enable us both to consider our present life in its only true light, as an opportunity put into our hands to glorify him amongst men, by a conduct suited to his word and will. I am miserably defective in this holy and blessed art; but I hope there is at the bottom of all my sinful infirmities a sincere desire to live just so long as I may be enabled, in some poor measure, to answer the end of my existence in this respect, and then to obey the summons, and attend him in a world where they who are his servants here shall pay him an unsinful obedience for ever. Your dear mother is too good to me, and puts a more

charitable construction upon my silence than the fact will warrant. I am not better employed than I should be in corresponding with her. I have that within which hinders me wretchedly in every thing that I ought to do, but is prone to trifle, and let time and every good thing run to waste. I hope however to write to her soon.

My love and best wishes attend Mr. Cowper, and all that enquire after me. May God be with you, to bless you, and do you good by all his dispensations; don't forget me when you are speaking to our best Friend before his mercy-seat.

Yours ever, W. C.

N. B. *I am not married.*

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, Oct. 20, 1768.

By this time, I presume, you are returned to the precincts of the law. The latter end of October, I know, generally puts an end to your relaxations; such as reading upon sunshiny banks, and contemplating the clouds, as you lie upon your back.

Permit it to be one of the *aliena negotia centum*, which are now beginning to buzz in your ears, to send me a twenty pound note by the first opportunity. I beg my affectionate respects to my friends in Cook's Court, and am, dear Sephus,

Yours sincerely, W^M^. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, Olney, August 5, 1769.

The note came safe.

My brother left us last Saturday, and is now I suppose refreshing his lungs with the pure air which blows upon the Welsh mountains; if indeed his lungs, which have been so long used to the fogs of Alma Mater, can be refreshed by the thin atmosphere of Snowdon or Plinlimmon.

I find that the vacancy I left at St. Alban's is filled up by a near relation. May the same Hand which struck off my fetters, deliver her also out of the House of Bondage; and may she say when she comes forth, what I hope to be able to say from my heart, while I have breath to utter it—It is good for me that I was afflicted.

Yours, my dear Joe, with my love to all who enquire after me, W^M^. COWPER.

TO MRS. COWPER.

MY DEAR COUSIN, Olney, August 31, 1769.

A LETTER from your brother Frederick brought me yesterday the most afflicting intelligence that has reached me these many years. I pray to God to comfort you, and to enable you to sustain this heavy stroke with that resignation to his will, which none but Himself can give, and which he gives to none but his own children. How blessed and happy is your lot, my dear friend, beyond the common lot of the greater part of mankind; that you know what it is to draw near to God in prayer, and are acquainted with a Throne of Grace! You have resources in the infinite love of a dear Redeemer, which are withheld from millions: and the promises of God, which are *yea and amen* in Jesus, are sufficient to answer all your necessities, and to sweeten the bitterest cup which your heavenly Father will ever put into your hand. May He now give you liberty to drink at these wells of salvation, till you are filled with consolation and peace in the midst of trouble! He has said, When thou passest through the fire I will be with thee, and when through the floods, they shall not overflow thee. You have need of such a word as this, and he knows your need of it, and the time of necessity is the time when he will be sure to appear in behalf of those who trust in him. I bear you and yours upon my heart before him night and day, for I never expect to hear of distress which shall call upon me with a louder voice to pray for the sufferer. I know the Lord hears me for myself, vile and sinful as I am, and believe and am sure that he will hear me for you also. He is the friend of the widow, and the father of the fatherless, even God in his holy habitation; in all our afflictions he is afflicted, and chastens us in mercy. Surely he will sanctify this dispensation to you, do you great and everlasting good by it, make the world appear like dust and vanity in your sight, as it truly is, and open to your view the glories of a better country, where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor pain, but God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes for ever. O that comfortable word! "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction:" so that our very sorrows are evidences of our calling, and he chastens us, because we are his children.

My dear cousin, I commit you to the word of his Grace, and to the comforts of his Holy Spirit. Your life is needful for

your family; may God in mercy to them prolong it, and may he preserve you from the dangerous effects, which a stroke like this might have upon a frame so tender as yours. I grieve with you, I pray for you; could I do more I would, but God must comfort you.

Yours, in our dear Lord Jesus, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOSEPH, Jan. 20, 1770.

THE newspapers informed me last week that the Society of the Middle Temple were come to a resolution that no more chambers should be sold with a power of assignment, and that this resolution would speedily become a law. If this be the case, it were better that mine were sold immediately, for it will never be worth my while to keep them till they shall want considerable repairs, which they must before many years are passed; and to sell them after this alteration takes place upon terms so much less valuable than those upon which I bought them, will be to lose half my money, unless the Inn is disposed to make up the difference.

I have been in treaty with Col. Cowper about the sale of my Law Books, and I desired him to pay the purchase money into your hands. If it is done, shall be glad to receive it.

Yours, dear Joe, affectionately, W^M^. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, Olney, Feb. 10, 1770.

I WROTE to you above a fortnight since about my chambers, and desiring you, if I have any money in town to send it. The last post brought me word from Cambridge that my brother is very ill, and it may be absolutely necessary for me to go over to him next week. His disorder is supposed to be owing to an inward decay, the consequence of a violent hæmorrhage he had in the autumn. Nothing is so likely to prevent my journey at present, as the want of money to defray the expenses of it. I shall be glad of an immediate answer whether I have any money in your hands or not, that if I have none, I may furnish myself with it as I can.

Yours, dear Joe, with much affection, W^M^. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOSEPH, Olney, Feb. 15, 1770.

I THANK you for the notes which I received yesterday, ten

pounds, and fifteen pounds. If there should be the same deficiency next winter, I shall be obliged to you, if without waiting to hear further from me, you will be so good as to sell my chambers.

I had a letter yesterday from a friend of my brother's at Be'net. I do not find that there is any immediate occasion for my going over to Cambridge, especially as I have wrote to desire that my brother will come to Olney. He is not at present in a condition to undertake the journey; but Dr. Glynn approves of his coming, and will send him as soon as it shall be expedient. The account that I hear of him is, that he has a great shortness of breath, attended with a troublesome cough, and that within this week, his legs are very much swelled, but when his friend wrote he had had a good night, was pretty cheerful, and upon the whole, not worse than when he wrote before.

I should be glad if my Uncle Ashley would be so good as to get an answer from Col. Cowper with respect to the books, that if he does not choose to be the purchaser they may be sold to another, for I imagine time and cobwebs will not much increase their value.

Yours, my dear friend, WM. COWPER.

TO MRS. MADAN, STAFFORD ROW, WESTMINSTER.

DEAR AUNT, Olney, March 24, 1770.

You may possibly by this time have heard of the death of my dear brother. I should not have left you to learn it from any but myself, had I had either spirits or opportunity to write sooner. He died on Tuesday last, the 20th. It was not judged proper that I should attend the funeral, I therefore took leave of the melancholy scene as soon as possible, and returned to Olney on Thursday. He has left me to sing of mercy and judgment. Greater sufferings than he underwent are seldom seen, greater mercy than he received, I believe, never. His views of Gospel grace were as clear, and his sense of his interest in Christ as strong, as if he had been exercised in the Christian walk and warfare many years. This is my consolation, and strong consolation I find it, that he is gone to his Father and my Father, to his God and my God.

He is to be buried at his living, about seven miles from Cambridge, by his own desire, this day; the master and fellows attend the funeral.

I shall be obliged to you, my dear aunt, if the next time yo write to dear Mrs. Cowper, at York, you will be so good as t inform her of this event.

I am, my dear aunt,

Yours affectionately in the Lord, W^M^. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, Olney, April 21, 1770.

YOU will oblige me by enquiring at the Bank, the next tim your business calls you that way, what stock my brother lef and by what means it is to be transferred to me; when th next dividend is payable, and whether it will be convenient fo you to receive it for me by letter of attorney. You may b sure it will give me great pleasure to find myself now enable to purchase such an annuity as may enable me to subsist con fortably without being any longer chargeable to my friend You are the best judge of these matters, and I shall be gla of your advice. I know not what is in the Bank, but shoul hope there may be as much, as with the sale of my brother' effects at Cambridge, and my own chambers, may enable m to compass this very desirable point. I mention this in con fidence.

Yours, dear Joe,

with my affectionate remembrances to Mrs. Hill and your sister, W^M^. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, May 8, 1770.

YOUR letter did not reach me till the last post, when I had no time to answer it. I left Cambridge immediately after m brother's death.

I am obliged to you for the particular account you have sen me. * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

He to whom I have surrendered myself and all my concern hath otherwise appointed, and let his will be done. He give me much which he withholds from others; and if he we pleased to withhold all that makes an outward differen between me and the poor mendicant in the street, it woul still become me to say, His Will be done.

It pleased God to cut short my brother's connexions and e pectations here, yet not without giving him lively and glorio

views of a better happiness than any he could propose to himself in such a world as this. Notwithstanding his great learning, (for he was one of the chief men in the university in that respect,) he was candid and sincere in his inquiries after truth. Though he could not come into my sentiments when I first acquainted him with them, nor in the many conversations which I afterward had with him upon the subject, could he be brought to acquiesce in them as scriptural and true, yet I had no sooner left St. Alban's than he began to study with the deepest attention those points in which we differed, and to furnish himself with the best writers upon them. His mind was kept open to conviction for five years, during all which time he laboured in this pursuit with unwearied diligence, as leisure and opportunity were afforded. Amongst his dying words were these, "Brother, I thought you wrong, yet wanted to believe as you did. I found myself not able to believe, yet always thought I should be one day brought to do so." From the study of books, he was brought upon his death-bed to the study of himself, and there learnt to renounce his righteousness, and his own most amiable character, and to submit himself to the righteousness which is of God by faith. With these views he was desirous of death. Satisfied of his interest in the blessing purchased by the blood of Christ, he prayed for death with earnestness, felt the approaches of it with joy, and died in peace. Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

MY DEAR COUSIN, Olney, June 7, 1770.

I AM obliged to you for sometimes thinking of an unseen friend, and bestowing a letter upon me. It gives me pleasure to hear from you, especially to find that our gracious Lord enables you to weather out the storms you meet with, and to cast anchor within the veil.

You judge rightly of the manner in which I have been affected by the Lord's late dispensation towards my brother. I found in it cause of sorrow, that I had lost so near a relation, and one so deservedly dear to me, and that he left me just when our sentiments upon the most interesting subject became the same; but much more cause of joy, that it pleased God to give me clear and evident proof that he had changed his heart, and adopted him into the number of his children. For

this I hold myself peculiarly bound to thank Him, because he might have done all that he was pleased to do for him, and yet have afforded him neither strength nor opportunity to declare it. I doubt not that he enlightens the understandings, and works a gracious change in the hearts of many in their last moments, whose surrounding friends are not made acquainted with it.

He told me that from the time he was first ordained he began to be dissatisfied with his religious opinions, and to suspect that there were greater things concealed in the Bible, than were generally believed or allowed to be there. From the time when I first visited him after my release from St. Alban's, he began to read upon the subject. It was at that time I informed him of the views of divine truth which I had received in that school of affliction. He laid what I said to heart, and began to furnish himself with the best writers upon the controverted points, whose works he read with great diligence and attention, comparing them all the while with the Scripture. None ever truly and ingenuously sought the truth but they found it. A spirit of earnest inquiry is the gift of God, who never says to any, seek ye my face in vain. Accordingly, about ten days before his death it pleased the Lord to dispel all his doubts, and to reveal in his heart the knowledge of the Saviour, and to give him firm and unshaken peace in the belief of his ability and willingness to save. As to the affair of the fortune-teller, he never mentioned it to me, nor was there any such paper found as you mention. I looked over all his papers before I left the place, and had there been such a one, must have discovered it. I have heard the report from other quarters, but no other particulars than that the woman foretold him when he should die. I suppose there may be some truth in the matter, but whatever he might think of it before his knowledge of the truth, and however extraordinary her predictions might really be, I am satisfied that he had then received far other views of the wisdom and majesty of God, than to suppose that he would entrust his secret counsels to a vagrant, who did not mean I suppose to be understood to have received her intelligence from the Fountain of Light, but thought herself sufficiently honoured by any who would give her credit for a secret intercourse of this kind with the Prince of darkness.

Mrs. Unwin is much obliged to you for your kind inquiry

after her. She is well, I thank God, as usual, and sends her respects to you. Her son is in the ministry, and has the living of Stock, in Essex. We were last week alarmed with an account of his being dangerously ill; Mrs. Unwin went to see him, and in a few days left him out of danger. W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOSEPH, Jan. 1, 1771.

You will receive two parcels of venison, a haunch and a shoulder. The first was intended for you, the other comes to you by mistake. Some hours after the basket was sent to the waggon, we discovered that the shoulder had been packed up instead of the haunch. All imaginable endeavours were made to recover it, but without success, the waggon could not be unloaded again, and it was impossible otherwise to get at it. You may therefore thank a blundering servant for a venison pasty, which if she had minded her business better would have been eaten at Olney.

Yours, my dear friend, W^M^. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, Olney, Jan. 30, 1772.

An article in the last General Evening, compared with an advertisement in the same paper, has affected me with the deepest concern upon my Uncle Ashley's account. In the present uncertainty of my mind I am left to imagine the worst. It would have been kind in some of my many relations, if they had not left me to learn such melancholy intelligence from the public prints. I shall be obliged to you for such particulars as you can favour me with. They will at least serve to relieve me from the variety of restless conjectures which cannot but employ my mind on such an occasion,

Yours, my dear friend, W^M^. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 4. 1772.

I am much indebted to you for your goodness in relieving me by the first opportunity from the fears I had upon my Uncle's account. The newspaper led me into the mistake, when the person was described as the Clerk of the House of Lords, without the addition of his proper distinction. But I feel much for Mrs. Cowper, and the poor young man, and love him better

than he is aware of, though I have not seen him many years, and he was but a child when I saw him last. So sudden a stroke must fall very heavy upon her; but I know her principles to be such as will afford her support under the heaviest that can befall her. The dress, the circumstance of his having no baggage, and the time, all seem to concur in giving us a good hope that he was the person seen at Dover. You will make me happy by sending me the first intelligence you hear of him, for I could hardly be more interested in any case, not immediately my own, than I am in this. I am, with my best respects to Mrs. Hill, and thanks for her kindness,

Yours ever, W^M^. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, April 7, 1772.

I AM very much obliged to you that in the hurry of so much business, you could yet find time to fulfil your promise, and send me the earliest intelligence of my poor cousin. But as Mrs. Cowper is so kind as to write to me herself upon the occasion, I will discharge you from any further trouble about it. We have seen the dark side of the dispensation, and I yet hope it has a bright one. This I know, that if he reap the same fruit of his sorrows, as thousands have found springing up from the deepest afflictions, he will rejoice in the remembrance of them, as I do, and shall do, while I live, in the recollection of mine.

Yours, my dear friend,
with my respects to Mrs. Hill and all your family,
W^M^. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 5, 1772.

YOU will certainly find the mistake on your side. When on the occasion of my brother's death, you was so good as to make enquiry for me at the Bank, you found seven hundred pounds there. Three hundred and fifty pounds were sold as you say to pay the College three hundred pounds, consequently three hundred and fifty remain. As you had forgot the principal doubtless you have not received the interest for the last two years, I would have it reserved, if you please, for payment of my tailor's bill. You say you expect farther remit-

tances on my account, out of these you will be so good as to pay yourself. I thank you for the money you sent me by the post, but twenty pounds will not serve my present expenses. This is the season of the year when my wants are always most importunate. I shall be glad therefore if you will sell the odd fifty pounds, and remit me the money by the first opportunity.

Believe me, my dear friend, truly sensible of your invitation, though I do not accept it. My peace of mind is of so delicate a constitution, that the air of London will not agree with it. You have my prayers, the only return I can make you, for your many acts of still-continued friendship.

If you should smile, or even laugh at my conclusion, and I were near enough to see it, I should not be angry, though I should be grieved. It is not long since I should have laughed at such a recompense myself. But glory be to the name of Jesus, those days are past, and I trust never to return!

I am yours, and Mrs. Hill's,
with much sincerity, W^M. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 14, 1772.

I RECEIVED last night the two notes for thirty pounds, and ten pounds. I will not trouble you at present with my tailor's bill. I shall have occasion to employ him in the spring, by which time it is possible there may be enough in my bank to answer his demand, and you may expect to see him about March or April with a draft in his hand. I do not design to break into the stock, unless it should be unavoidably necessary. But you know well that I have been a considerable loser in point of income by my brother's death, and that the price of every thing is continually advancing, so that it is become much more difficult to bring the year about now, than when I first left St. Alban's. I am guilty of no extravagance, or inattention to what is called the main chance, nor would be on any account. My situation in life is comfortable; my friends would wish it to be so; nor is there a place in the kingdom where I should enjoy so many advantages as here. And yet, as I say, there may possibly arise a necessity of having recourse to the funds, though nothing less than necessity shall compel us to do it. In that case I should hope not

to be censured, for the reasons above mentioned: and in the mean time shall do my best to prevent the necessity of such a measure.

Believe me, my dear friend,
affectionately yours. WM. COWPER.[1]

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOSEPH, Olney, May 18, 1776.

You have my thanks for the very fine mackerel you sent, and for your kind invitation to Wargrove, I am a little mortified to find that I had not got the start of your gardener as much as I hoped to have done; but let him be upon his guard, or I shall be too nimble for him another year.

I want money, not to lend, nor to give, but for my own personal and particular use; and want it so much, that I can't go on without it. You will oblige me if you will give yourself the trouble, to sell fifty pounds and remit me the produce immediately. I beg you will do this without making any sad reflections upon it; for assure yourself, neither you nor I shall ever have any reason to repent the doing it.

Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May 26, 1776.

More thanks for more mackerel, and many more for the fifty pounds, which I received yesterday. It gave me the greater pleasure, as it afforded a convincing proof that in your former refusal you was guided by nothing but an attention to my interest.

The winter having swallowed up the spring this year has thrown me so backward in some of my nicer productions, that I shall not be able to send you any melons till late in the season; but if you raise none yourself, they shall wait upon you as soon as they are ripe.

Yours affectionately, WM. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 6, 1766.

As you have an extensive acquaintance, you may possibly be

[1] There is a gap in the correspondence with Mr. Hill from the date of this letter to May 18, 1776.

able to serve me in a design I have lately formed, of taking two, three, or four boys, under my tuition, to instruct them in the Greek and Latin languages. I should pursue, with some few exceptions, the Westminster method of instruction, being that which I am best acquainted with myself, and the best upon the whole that I have had an opportunity of observing. They would lodge and board under our roof, and be in all respects accommodated and attended in a manner that would well warrant the demand of an hundred guineas per annum.

You have often wished me an employment, and I know none but this for which I am qualified. If I can engage in it, it will probably be serviceable to me in more respects than one: but as it will afford me some sort of an establishment, at least for a time, it cannot but be desirable to one in my circumstances. If you are acquainted therefore with any person who has a son or sons between eight and ten years of age, for whom he would wish to find a tutor who will not make a property of them, nor neglect any means in his power to inform them thoroughly in what he undertakes to teach, you will oblige me by recommending *me*. Doubtless there are many such; and it is not an easy matter to find a family where the two grand points of education, literature and sobriety, would be more closely attended to than in This.

We return you many thanks for the fine turbot you was so kind as to send. Believe me your's, &c.,

W^M^. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Aug. 1, 1776.

THE coldness of the past season would be forgotten in the heat of the present, if the effects of it were not still visible in the garden. My melons, which ought to have been eaten or at least eatable by this time, are not yet ripe; and as you are taking your repose at Wargrove, you will agree with me, I imagine, that it would hardly be worth while to trundle them so far. Else, as I flatter myself they will be better flavoured than such as are raised for sale, which are generally flashy, and indebted to the watering pot for their size, I should have been glad to have sent you half my crop.

If it were to rain pupils, perhaps I might catch a tub full;

but till it does, the fruitlessness of my enquiries makes me think I must keep my Greek and Latin to myself.

Yours affectionately, W^M^. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 12, 1776.

THE very agreeable contents of your last came safe to hand in the shape of two notes for thirty pounds. I am to thank you likewise for a barrel of very good oysters, received about a fortnight ago. One to whom fish is so welcome as it is to me, can have no great occasion to distinguish the sorts. In general, therefore, whatever fish are likely to think a jaunt into the country agreeable, will be sure to find me ready to receive them; butts, plaice, flounder, or any other. If herrings are yet to be had, as they cannot be bought at Olney till they are good for nothing, they will be welcome too. We have seen none this year, except a parcel that Mrs. Unwin sent for, and the fishmonger sent stale ones, a trick they are apt to play upon their customers at a distance.

Having suffered so much from nervous fevers myself, I know how to congratulate Ashley upon his recovery. Other distempers only batter the walls; but *they* creep silently into the citadel, and put the garrison to the sword.

You perceive I have not made a squeamish use of your obliging offer. The remembrance of past years, and of the sentiments formerly exchanged in our evening walks, convinces me still that an unreserved acceptance of what is graciously offered is the handsomest way of dealing with one of your character. Believe me yours, W^M^. COWPER.

The Wellingborough Diligence passes our door every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, and inns at the Cross Keys, St. John's Street, Smithfield.

As to the frequency, which you leave to my choice too, you have no need to exceed the number of your former remittances.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOE, Dec. 10, 1776.

RECEIVED two notes for twenty-five pounds.

This day fortnight came two dozen herrings, remarkably fine. If you ordered any other fish to follow them they swam *another* way.

Dr. Madan's preferment was in the paper, but I overlooked it, so I know neither the name, nor the value of it. But being a sinecure, and as we say, a very valuable one, it has every requisite to raise the spirits.

Yours affectionately, W^M^. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOSEPH, Jan. 5, 1777.

I AM much obliged to you for a tub of very fine spiced salmon which arrived yesterday: it cost us some debate, and a wager into the bargain, one asserting it to be sturgeon, and the other what it proved to be. But the lady was in the right, as she should be upon all such occasions.

My respects wait upon your family. The cold is excessive; but I have a little greenhouse, which by the help of a little fire, is as blooming and as green as May.

Yours affectionately, W^M^. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 30, 1777.

THOUGH you are by this time in Berkshire at least, if not in Warwickshire, I thought it would be best to acknowledge the receipt of the draft upon Child for twenty pounds, by the return of the post.

I sent you two brace of cucumbers by the Diligence on Friday, that is to say, critically at the time when they were sure to miss you: if yours are as forward, you have outstripped all our nobility and squires in this country. Neither the Duke of Bedford nor Lord Sussex have cut yet. But you must not be angry with your gardener, for we have more sunshine in two months at some seasons, than we have had this half-year. Yours ever, W^M^. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, April—I fancy the 20th, 1777.

THANKS for a turbot, a lobster, and Captain Brydone: a gentleman who relates his travels so agreeably, that he deserves always to travel with an agreeable companion. I have been reading Gray's Works, and think him the only poet since Shakspeare entitled to the character of sublime. Perhaps you will remember that I once had a different opinion of him. I

was prejudiced. He did not belong to our Thursday society and was an Eton man, which lowered him prodigiously in ou esteem. I once thought Swift's letters the best that could b written; but I like Gray's better. His humour, or his wit, o whatever it is to be called, is never ill-natured or offensive, an yet, I think equally poignant with the Dean's.

I am yours affectionately, W^M^. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May 25, 1777.

WE differ not much in our opinion of Mr. Gray. When wrote last, I was in the middle of the book. His later Epistles I think, are worth little, *as such*, but might be turned to excel lent account by a young student of taste and judgement. A to Mr. West's Letters, I think I could easily bring your opinio of them to square with mine. They are elegant and sensible but having nothing in them that is characteristic, or that dis criminates them from the letters of any other young man o taste and learning. As to the book you mention, I am i doubt whether to read it or not. I should like the philoso phical part of it, but the political, which, I suppose, is a detai of intrigues carried on by the Company and their servants, history of rising and falling nabobs, I should have no appetit to at all. I will not, therefore, give you the trouble of sendin it at present. Yours affectionately, W^M^. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 13, 1777.

YOU need not give yourself any further trouble to procure m the South Sea voyages. Lord Dartmouth, who was her about a month since, and was so kind as to pay me two visits has furnished me with both Cook's and Forster's. 'Tis wel for the poor natives of those distant countries that our na tional expenses cannot be supplied by cargoes of yams an bananas. Curiosity, therefore, being once satisfied, they ma possibly be permitted for the future to enjoy their riches o that kind in peace.

If, when you are most at leisure, you can find out Bake upon the Microscope, or Vincent Boorne's Latin Poems, th last edition, and send them, I shall be obliged to you. Either or both, if they can be easily found.

I am yours affectionately, W^M^. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 23, 1777.

If a melon in the spring is a rarity, a melon in the beginning of winter perhaps may be so too, especially after so sharp a frost as we have lately had, and still more if it should happen to be a frost when you eat it. This and the fellow to it grew upon one joint. The vine was never watered since it was a seed. We ate part of one of them to-day, and thought it good; the other which is better ripened, we supposed might be even worthy of a place at your table, and have sent it accordingly.

I am obliged to you for three parcels of herrings. The melon is a crimson Cantalupe. Believe me,

Affectionately yours, W^M^. COWPER.

The basket contains, besides, Bourne's poems and Baker on the Microscope with thanks.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 28, 1777.

As Lord Dartmouth was so kind as to furnish me with Captain Cook's last tour round the globe, and with Mr. Forster's account of the same voyage, I am unwilling to be farther troublesome to him; and as I can venture to take a little liberty with you, which I could not handsomely take with his lordship, I will beg the favour of you, when you can do it conveniently, to send me either Commodore Byron's voyage round the world, or Captain Cook's *first* voyage, or both, if they are both to be had, which as the public curiosity is pretty well satisfied by this time, may possibly be the case. There was an account published by some of the people of the long boat, who parted from Captain Cook upon the coast of Patagonia. Their separation is all that is mentioned in Mr. Byron's first publication. If this can be procured I shall be glad of it. And pray do not scruple to tell me if I am too troublesome in pestering you with these commissions, for I had rather never see the books, than extort from you one single *Pish*.

Yours affectionately, W^M^. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 11, 1777.

If I begin with thank you, I must end with it too, unless I

manage it thus. I am obliged to you, and thank you for the books, for the fish, for the thirty pounds, which I hope I shall be able to negotiate here; and Mrs. Hill, for the seeds she is so kind as to send me, is entitled to the same return. Besides which, when I return the books, I will enclose with them some seed of the plant called the Broallia, a new flower in this country. A few seeds were given me last year, which have produced a quantity. Gordon I am told sells it two guineas an ounce. We account it the most elegant flower we have seen, and when Lord Dartmouth was here, he did it the honour to think with us. I will send with it directions for the management of it.

I am, with compliments to Mrs. Hill,

Yours affectionately, W^M^. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Jan. 1, 1778.

YOUR last packet was doubly welcome, and Mrs. Hill's kindness gives me peculiar pleasure, not as coming from a stranger to me, for I do not account her so, though I never saw her, but as coming from one so nearly connected with yourself. I shall take care to acknowledge the receipt of her obliging letter, when I return the books. Assure yourself, in the mean time, that I read as if the librarian was at my elbow, continually jogging it, and growling out, Make haste But as I read aloud, I shall not have finished before the end of the week, and will return them by the diligence next Monday.

I shall be glad if you will let me know whether I am to understand by the sorrow you express, that any part of my former supplies is actually cut off, or whether they are only more tardy in coming in than usual. It is useful even to the rich, to know, as nearly as may be, the exact amount of their income; but how much more so to a man of my small dimensions. If the former should be the case, I shall have less reason to be surprised, than I have to wonder at the continuance of them so long. Favours are favours indeed, when laid out upon so barren a soil, where the expense of sowing is never accompanied by the smallest hope of return. What pain there is in gratitude, I have often felt; but the pleasure of requiting an obligation, has always been out of my reach.

Affectionately yours, W^M^. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, April 11, 1778.

Poor Sir Thomas! I knew that I had a place in his affections, and from his own information, many years ago, a place in his will; but little thought that after the lapse of so many years I should still retain it. His remembrance of me, after so long a season of separation, has done me much honour, and leaves me the more reason to regret his decease.

I am reading the Abbé with great satisfaction, and think him the most intelligent writer upon so extensive a subject I ever met with; in every respect superior to the Abbé in Scotland. Yours affectionately, W^M^. COWPER.

P. S. Many thanks for the intended fish.

Sunday morning.

Which is just come, and should have been here last night. I shall bumble my landlady at Newport.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May 7, 1778.

I HAVE been in continual fear lest every post should bring a summons for the Abbé Raynal; and am glad that I have finished him before my fears were realized. I have kept him long, but not through neglect or idleness. I read the five volumes to Mrs. Unwin; and my voice will seldom serve me with more than an hour's reading at a time. I am indebted to him for much information upon subjects, which, however interesting, are so remote from those with which country folks in general are conversant, that had not his works reached me at Olney, I should have been for ever ignorant of them.

I admire him as a philosopher, as a writer, as a man of extraordinary intelligence, and no less extraordinary abilities to digest it. He is a true patriot. But then the world is his country. The frauds and tricks of the cabinet, and the counter, seem to be equally objects of his aversion. And if he had not found that religion too had undergone a mixture of artifice, in its turn, perhaps he would have been a Christian.

Yours affectionately, W^M^. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 18, 1778.

I TRULY rejoice that the chancellor has made you such a pre-

sent, that he has given such an additional lustre to it manner of conferring it, and that all this happened bef went to Wargrove, because it made your retirement tl more agreeable. This is just according to the char the man. He will give grudgingly, in answer to soli but delights in surprising those he esteems, with his May you live to receive still further proofs that I am n taken in my opinion of him.

Yours affectionately, W^M^. COW

TO THE REV. W. UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 18

I HURRY you into the midst of things at once, which not much in the epistolary style, is acknowledged how be very sublime. Mr. Morley, videlicet the grocer, i of much neglect and carelessness, and has lately so m appointed your mother, that she is at last obliged t him, and begs you will send her Mr. Rawlinson's that she may transfer her custom to him. She adds m that she was well aware of the unseasonableness of at this time, and did not mean that you should order Olney till the spring.

We are indebted to you for your political intellige have it not in our power to pay you in kind. Procee ever, to give us such information as cannot be learned f newspaper; and when any thing arises at Olney, tha in the threadbare style of daily occurrences, you sh of it in return. Nothing of this sort has happened lat cept that a lion was imported here at the fair, seventy age, and was as tame as a goose. Your mother and I embrace his keeper with his paws, and lick his face. saw him receive his head in his mouth, and restore it again unhurt;—a sight we chose not to be favoure but rather advised the honest man to discontinue the p —a practice hardly reconcileable to prudence, unless h head to spare. The beast, however, was a very mag one, and much more royal in his appearance than thos seen in the Tower.

The paper tells us that the Chancellor is frequentl Register Office, having conceived a design to shorten ceedings in his court. If he has indeed such a purpose

ı so industrious and so resolute, that he will never let it unaccomplished. Perhaps the practitioners will have no ın to regret it, as they may gain in such an event, more ıe multiplicity of suits, than they do at present by the :h of them.

ɔur mother joins me in affectionate respects—I should said in love, to yourself, Mrs. Unwin, Miss Shuttle-h, and little John. If you will accept this for a letter, aps I may be able to furnish you with more such upon oc-ın. Yours, with thanks for your last,

WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. W. UNWIN.

DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 3, 1778.

s last night agreeably surprised by the arrival of Mr. ıley. His own merit is his sufficient recommendation; his appearance, without having been expected or even ght of, made him still more welcome. You have done a thing in sending him, and I wish we could recompense a pine-apple for every volume.

made Mr. Wright's gardener a present of fifty sorts of plant seeds: in return, he has presented me with six ıng pines, which I have put into a bark bed, where they e at present as well as I could wish. If they produce fruit, you will stand some little chance to partake of . But you must not expect giants, for being trans-ɔed in December will certainly give them a check, and ably diminish their size. He has promised to supply me still better plants in October, which is the proper season for ng them, and with a reinforcement every succeeding year. Hill sent me the seeds; which perhaps could not have purchased for less than three guineas. 'Tis thus we great ɜners establish a beneficial intercourse with each other, and sh ourselves with valuable things that, therefore, cost us ıng.

ɔw did you escape the storm? It did us no damage, except ıng us awake, and giving your mother the headache; and ɔt—what can hardly be called a damage, lifting a long and y palisade from the top of our garden wall, and setting it ɜntly down upon two old hot-beds, that it was not at all en or impaired.

Your mother is well at present, and sends her love, joining with me, at the same time, in affectionate remembrances to all the family. Yours, WM. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, April 11, 1779.

WHEN you favoured me with the last remittance of twenty pounds, you was so kind as to say I might draw for more, if I had occasion for it. The occasion is now come, and I shall be obliged to you for a further advance. I know I am in your debt, which sits the easier upon me, because I am almost always so. Long habit and custom are able to familiarize to us things much more disagreeable than this. A debt of this kind, I am, at present at least able to discharge. But I owe you upon other accounts what I can never pay, except by continuing Affectionately and truly yours, W^M^. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAD FRIEND, May 26, 1779.

I MUST beg your assistance in a design I have formed to cheat the glazier. Government has laid a tax upon glass, and he has trebled it. I want as much as will serve for a large frame, but am unwilling to pay an exorbitant price for it. I shall be obliged to you, therefore, if you will enquire at a glass-manufacturer's how he sells his Newcastle glass, such as is used for frames and hothouses. If you will be so good as to send me this information, and at the same time the manufacturer's address, I will execute the rest of the business myself, without giving you any farther trouble.

I am obliged to you for the Poets; and though I little thought that I was translating so much money out of your pocket into the bookseller's, when I turned Prior's poem into Latin, yet I must needs say that, if you think it worth while to purchase the English Classics at all, you cannot possess yourself of them upon better terms. I have looked into some of the volumes, but not having yet finished the Register have merely looked into them. A few things I have met, with, which if they had been burned the moment they were written, it would have been better for the author and at least as well for his readers. There is not much of this, but a little is too much. I think it a pity the editor admitted any; the English Muse would have lost no credit by the omission of such trash. Some of them again seem to me to have but a

very disputable right to a place among the Classics; and I am quite at a loss, when I see them in such company, to conjecture what is Dr. Johnson's idea or definition of classical merit. But if he inserts the poems of some who can hardly be said to deserve such an honour, the purchaser may comfort himself with the hope that he will exclude none that do.

Your mother sends her love and affectionate remembrance to all at Stock, from the tallest to the shortest there, in which she is accompained by yours, WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July — 79.

If you please, you may give my service to Mr. James Martin, glazier, and tell him that I have furnished myself with glass from Bedford, for half the money.

When I was at Margate, it was an excursion of pleasure to go to see Ramsgate. The pier, I remember, was accounted a most excellent piece of stone-work, and such I found it. By this time, I suppose, it is finished; and surely it is no small advantage, that you have an opportunity of observing how nicely those great stones are put together, as often as you please, without either trouble or expense. But you think Margate more lively. So is a Cheshire cheese full of mites more lively than a sound one: but that very liveliness only proves its rottenness. I remember, too, that Margate, though full of company, was generally filled with such company, as people who were nice in the choice of their company, were rather fearful of keeping company with. The hoy went to London every week, loaded with mackerel and herrings, and returned loaded with company. The cheapness of the conveyance made it equally commodious for Dead fish and Lively company. So, perhaps, your solitude at Ramsgate may turn out another advantage; at least I should think it one.

There was not, at that time, much to be seen in the Isle of Thanet, besides the beauty of the country, and the fine prospects of the sea, which are no where surpassed except in the Isle of Wight, or upon some parts of the coast of Hampshire. One sight, however, I remember, engaged my curiosity, and I went to see it:—a fine piece of ruins, built by the late Lord Holland, at a great expense, which, the day after I saw it, tumbled down for nothing. Perhaps, therefore, it is still a ruin;

and if it is, I would advise you by all means to visit it, as it must have been much improved by this fortunate incident. It is hardly possible to put stones together with that air of wild and magnificent disorder which they are sure to acquire by falling of their own accord.

We heartily wish that Mrs. Unwin may receive the utmost benefit of bathing. At the same time we caution *you* against the use of it, however the heat of the weather may seem to recommend it. It is not safe for thin habits, hectically inclined.

I remember,—(the fourth and last thing I mean to remember upon this occasion,) that Sam Cox the counsel, walking by the seaside as if absorbed in deep contemplation, was questioned about what he was musing on. He replied, "I was wondering that such an almost infinite and unwieldy element should produce a *sprat.*"

Our love attends your whole party.

Yours affectionately, W. C.

P. S. You are desired to purchase three pounds of sixpenny white worsted, at a shop well recommended for that commodity. The isle of Thanet is famous for it, beyond any other place in the kingdom.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 17, 1779.

We envy you your sea-breezes. In the garden we feel nothing but the reflection of the heat from the walls; and in the parlour, from the opposite houses. I fancy Virgil was so situated when he wrote those two beautiful lines:

——— *Oh quis me gelidis in vallibus Hæmi*
Sistat, et ingenti ramorum protegat umbrâ!

The worst of it is, that though the sun-beams strike as forcibly upon my harp-strings as they did upon his, they elicit no such sounds, but rather produce such groans as they are said to have drawn from those of the statue of Memnon.

As you have ventured to make the experiment, your own experience will be your best guide in the article of bathing. An inference will hardly follow, though one should pull at it with all one's might, from Smollett's case to yours. He was corpulent, muscular, and strong; whereas, if you were either stolen or strayed, such a description of you in an advertisement would hardly direct an enquirer with sufficient accuracy and

t if bathing does not make your head ache, or leeping at night, I should imagine it could not

aking a walk upon the strand at Margate, where ı and perpendicular. At long intervals there cut through the rock down to the beach, and r way of access to it, or of return from it. I mile upon the water edge, without observing ıs rising fast upon me. When I *did* observe it, o late. I ran every step back again, and had ave my distance. I mention this as a caution, happen at any time to be surprised as I was. y unpleasant to be forced to cling, like a cat, precipice, and perhaps hardly possible to do rs without any respite.

ifle, but it is a real disadvantage to have no o pass by than the gentleman you mention. ppose him settled and promoted in the army, the law, how uncouth the sound—Captain Two- Twopenny! Judge Twopenny! The abilities eld would hardly impart a dignity to such a he perform deeds worthy of poetical panegyric, ould it be to ennoble the sound of Twopenny!

! place him high upon the lists of Fame,
onderous man, and Twopenny his name!

us, if the French should land in the Isle of r. Twopenny should fall into their hands, he opportunity to frenchify his name, and may onsieur Deux Sous; which, when he comes to y Cartel, will easily resume an English form, ally into Two Shoes, in my mind a considerable

Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO THE REV. W. UNWIN.

ND, Aug. 17, 1779.

pect line for line, or that I should measure your by a foot rule, and send you so many feet and ı in return. I like very well to write; but then ardening too, and can find but little leisure for when the weather forbids me to employ myself ıts. Such is the case this morning; the almost

tropical heat of the day has driven me into the house, where, not knowing how to employ myself better, I am doing as you see.

You thought you had said too much about the Doctor; and I feared I had said too much, or with too much freedom, about Mr. Twopenny; though I stood quite clear of any design to undervalue the man, at the same time I made merry with his name. I used it as a plaything, imagining I should hardly find a cheaper.

Respecting the Doctor, you judge exactly as I had judged before I received your last, and so I had told your mother. It would be wrong to court him,—*non est tanti:* you held him by the hand while he was sinking, and if upon his first beginning to emerge, he is capable of putting an intended slight upon you, your best course is to suffer it patiently, and to take care that it be the last.

As to your Kentish petitioners, they mean well, but the case is hopeless, and, consequently, the attempt (may I venture to say it?) idle. When Henry the Eighth reformed the church, he had twice as much power as George the Third; both Houses of Parliament were on his side, and the clergy themselves, in convocation, being both ashamed and afraid to do otherwise, concurred heartily in the work; but when the Parliament itself is to be reformed, itself must effect the reformation. And, do you think you have eloquence enough, in all your county, to persuade them to relinquish what they have so earnestly laboured to obtain? Will pensioners, when they have read your harangue, resign their emoluments; placemen quit their offices; and candidates for preferment abandon all their blooming hopes, and say, "these gentlemen are in the right; the nation will be ruined, we will retire, and be content?" I am afraid not; luxury makes men necessitous; necessity exposes them to corruption; corruption inclines them still more to profusion; and profusion, continually increasing, begets new necessities. These again engender corruption and profligacy of principle, and, as poor Robin says, so the world goes round. The king, in the mean time, is a sorrowful spectator of the scene, but a helpless one. No measure of government can proceed without a majority on its side, a majority cannot be had unless it be bought; then what answer can his majesty possibly return to the petition? If it is conceived in

and obedient terms, it is teasing him; if otherwise, in-
g. So you see I differ from your neighbours upon the
t.
longer arm and a stronger hand is requisite to this
ss. Man never was reformed by man; nor ever can be.
petition therefore, should be carried elsewhere, or it
e in vain. *Dixi.*

rejoice that you are all safe at Stock again. Your
r is well, and sends her best love. You will be pleased
nember me affectionately to all under your roof, and to
e me Yours, WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

O MIO, Sept. 21, 1779.

eased to buy me a glazier's diamond pencil. I have
l the two frames designed to receive my pine plants;
cannot mend the kitchen windows, till by the help of that
ment I can reduce the glass to its proper dimensions.
ere a plumber I should be a complete glazier; and possi-
e happy time may come, when I shall be seen trudging
to the neighbouring towns with a shelf of glass hanging
back. If government should impose another tax upon
ommodity, I hardly know a business in which a gentle-
night more successfully employ himself. A Chinese, of
mes my fortune, would avail himself of such an oppor-
without scruple; and why should not I, who want
y as much as any mandarin in China? Rousseau would
been charmed to have seen me so occupied, and would
exclaimed with rapture, "that he had found the Emilius
he supposed) had subsisted only in his own idea." I
recommend it to you to follow my example. You will
atly qualify yourself for the task, and may not only
yourself at home, but may even exercise your skill
nding the church windows; which, as it would save
y to the parish, would conduce, together with your other
terial accomplishments, to make you extremely popular in
ace.

ave eight pair of tame pigeons. When I first enter the
n in a morning, I find them perched upon the wall,
g for their breakfast; for I feed them always upon the
l-walk. If your wish should be accomplished, and you

should find yourself furnished with the wings of a dove, undoubtedly find you amongst them. Only be so g that should be the case, to announce yourself by some or other. For I imagine your crop will require son better than tares to fill it.

Your mother and I last week made a trip in a postch Gayhurst, the seat of Mr. Wright, about four miles off. derstood that I did not much affect strange faces, an over his servant on purpose to inform me that he was into Leicestershire, and that if I chose to see the gar might gratify myself without danger of seeing the pro I accepted the invitation, and was delighted with all I there. The situation is happy, the gardens elegant posed, the hot-house in the most flourishing state, a orange trees the most captivating creatures of the kind saw. A man, in short, had need have the talents of Langford, the auctioneers, to do the whole scene justice

Our love attends you all. Yours, W

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 2.

You begin to count the remaining days of the vacatio with impatience, but through unwillingness to see the it. For the mind of man, at least of most men, is busy in anticipating the evil and the good. That word *pation* puts me in remembrance of the pamphlet of that which, if you purchased, I should be glad to borrow. seen only an extract from it in the Review, which ma laugh heartily, and wish to peruse the whole.

The newspaper informs me of the arrival of the J fleet. I hope it imports some pine-apple plants for have a good frame and a good bed prepared to receive I send you annexed a fable, in which the pine-apple m figure, and shall be glad if you like the taste of it. Tw of soles, with shrimps, which arrived last night, demar acknowledgements. You have heard that when Ario formed upon the harp, the fish followed him. I reall no design to fiddle you out of more fish, but if you esteem my verses worthy of such a price, though I shall be so renowned as he was, I shall think myself equa *debted* to the muse that helps me.

My affectionate respects attend Mrs. Hill. She has put Mr. Wright to the expense of building a new hot-house: the plants produced by the seeds she gave me, having grown so large as to require an apartment by themselves.

Yours, W^M^. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 31, 1779.

I WROTE my last letter merely to inform you that I had nothing to say; in answer to which you have said nothing. I admire the propriety of your conduct though I am a loser by it. I will endeavour to say something now, and shall hope for something in return.

I have been well entertained with Johnson's biography, for which I thank you: with one exception, and that a swingeing one, I think he has acquitted himself with his usual good sense and sufficiency. His treatment of Milton is unmerciful to the last degree. A pensioner is not likely to spare a republican; and the Doctor, in order, I suppose, to convince his royal patron of the sincerity of his monarchical principles, has belaboured that great poet's character with the most industrious cruelty. As a man, he has hardly left him the shadow of one good quality. Churlishness in his private life, and a rancorous hatred of every thing royal in his public, are the two colours with which he has smeared all the canvass. If he had any virtues, they are not to be found in the Doctor's picture of him; and it is well for Milton, that some sourness in his temper is the only vice with which his memory has been charged; it is evident enough that if his biographer could have discovered more, he would not have spared him. As a poet, he has treated him with severity enough, and has plucked one or two of the most beautiful feathers out of his Muse's wing, and trampled them under his great foot. He has passed sentence of condemnation upon Lycidas, and has taken occasion, from that charming poem, to expose to ridicule, (what is indeed ridiculous enough,) the childish prattlement of pastoral compositions, as if Lycidas was the prototype and pattern of them all. The liveliness of the description, the sweetness of the numbers, the classical spirit of antiquity that prevails in it, go for nothing. I am convinced by the way, that he has no ear for poetical numbers, or that it was stopped by prejudice

against the harmony of Milton's. Was there ever any thing so delightful as the music of the Paradise Lost. It is like that of a fine organ; has the fullest and the deepest tones of majesty, with all the softness and elegance of the Dorian flute. Variety without end and never equalled, unless perhaps by Virgil. Yet the Doctor has little or nothing to say upon this copious theme, but talks something about the unfitness of the English language for blank verse, and how apt it is, in the mouth of some readers, to degenerate into declamation. Oh! I could thresh his old jacket, till I made his pension jingle in his pocket.

I could talk a good while longer, but I have no room; our love attends you. Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 14, 1779.

YOUR approbation of my last Heliconian present encourages me to send you another. I wrote it, indeed, on purpose for you; for my subjects are not always such as I could hope would prove agreeable to you. My mind has always a melancholy cast, and is like some pools I have seen, which, though filled with a black and putrid water, will nevertheless, in a bright day, reflect the sun-beams from their surface.

"On the Promotion of Edward Thurlow," &c.

Yours affectionately, WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 2, 1779.

How quick is the succession of human events! The cares of to-day are seldom the cares of to-morrow; and when we lie down at night, we may safely say to most of our troubles —"Ye have done your worst, and we shall meet no more."

This observation was suggested to me by reading your last letter; which though I have written since I received it, I have never answered. When that epistle passed under your pen, you were miserable about your tithes, and your imagination was hung round with pictures, that terrified you to such a degree, as made even the receipt of money burdensome. But it is all over now. You sent away your farmers in good humour, (for you can make people merry whenever you please,) and now you have nothing to do but to chink your purse, and laugh at what is

ast. Your delicacy makes you groan under that which other ıen never feel, or feel but slightly. A fly, that settles upon ıe tip of the nose, is troublesome; and this is a comparison lequate to the most that mankind in general are sensible of, pon such tiny occasions. But the flies, that pester you, always et between your eyelids, where the annoyance is almost insupportable.

I would follow your advice, and endeavour to furnish Lord Forth with a scheme of supplies for the ensuing year, if the ifficulty I find in answering the call of my own emergencies id not make me despair of satisfying those of the nation. I an say but this; if I had ten acres of land in the world, hereas I have not one, and in those ten acres should discover gold mine, richer than all Mexico and Peru, when I had eserved a few ounces for my own annual supply, I would illingly give the rest to government. My ambition would e more gratified by annihilating the national incumbrances, ıan by going daily down to the bottom of a mine, to wallow ı my own emolument. This is patriotism, you will allow; ıt, alas, this virtue is for the most part in the hands of those ho can do no good with it! He that has but a single handful ? it, catches so greedily at the first opportunity of growing ch, that his patriotism drops to the ground, and he grasps the ɔld instead of it. He that never meets with such an opportuity, holds it fast in his clenched fists, and says,—"Oh, how ıuch good I would do, if I could!"

Your mother says—"Pray send my dear love." There is ardly room to add mine, but you will suppose it.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. W. UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 13, 1780.

'HE last of your mother's two reasons for not writing sooner, ıust serve as an apology for me. Uncertain when you would o to town, I chose to stay till that affair was decided. I am to ıank you for your portraits taken from the life in the House f Commons, not forgetting the Chancellor, the Duke of Richıond, and the Bishops' wigs. Mr. Burke's mispronunciation f the word *vectigal*, brings to my remembrance a jocular alteration that passed when I was once in the gallery, between Mr. ;igby and the late Alderman Beckford. The latter was a very

incorrect speaker, and the former, I imagine, not a very accurate scholar. He ventured, however, upon a quotation from Terence, and delivered it thus, *Sine* Scelere *et Baccho friget Venus.* The Alderman interrupted him, was very severe upon his mistake, and restored Ceres to her place in the sentence. Mr. Rigby replied that he was obliged to his worthy friend for teaching him Latin, and would take the first opportunity to return the favour by teaching him English.

You are not alone, I believe, in thinking that you see a striking resemblance between the reign of his present majesty and that of Charles the First. The undue extension of the influence of the crown; the discountenancing and displacing of men obnoxious to the court, though otherwise men of unexceptionable conduct and character; the waste of the public money, and especially the suspicion that obtains of a fixed design in government to favour the cause of Popery, are features common to both faces. Again these causes have begun to produce the same effects now as they did in the reign of that unhappy monarch. It is long since I saw Lord Clarendon's account of it, but unless my memory fails me much, I think you will find, (and, indeed, it could hardly be otherwise,) that the leaders of the discontented party, and the several counties in their interest, had a good understanding with each other, and devised means for the communication of intelligence much like our modern committees of correspondence. You ask my opinion of the tendency of such associations. No, I mistake; you do not ask mine, but you give your own, which is exactly according to my own sentiments. Indeed they are explicit enough, and if one was inclined to suppose their intentions peaceable, they have taken care that the supposition shall be groundless. A year ago they expressed their wishes that the people would rise, and their astonishment that they did not. Now, they tell government plainly that the spirit of resistance is gone forth, that the nation is at last roused, that they will fly to arms upon the next provocation, and bid them slight the Yorkshire petition at their peril. Sir George Saville's speech reminded me of that line in which is described the opening of the Temple of Janus, a ceremony that obtained as the established prelude to a war;

Discordia tetra
Belli ferratos postes, portusque refregit.

ms clear, then, that hostilities are intended as the last . As to the time they choose for the purpose, it is, in l, the worst they could have chosen. So many gentle- the first rank and property in the kingdom, resolutely on their purpose, their design professedly so laudable, r means of compassing it so formidable, would com- tention at any time. A quarrel of this kind, even if it ed to the last extremity, might possibly be settled the ruin of the country, while there was peace with the uring kingdoms; but while there is war abroad, such sive war as the present, I fear it cannot.

to what your mother says about Indian ink,—a few and a pencil or two, with any thing else that may be ed convenient for the use of a beginner, as far as five . I do not think my talent in the art worth more. res me to remind you of your promised vote and in- r a place in Christ's Hospital, of which, she under- you are now a governor;—and the parcel may come waggon, which it will do if it is sent on a Wednes- ne Windmill in St. John Street.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

AR FRIEND, Feb. 27, 1780.

are pleased to desire my letters, I am the more with writing them; though at the same time I must stify my surprise that you should think them worth ; as I seldom send one that I think favourably of my- his is not to be understood as an imputation upon your udgement, but as an encomium upon my own modesty ility, which I desire you to remark well. It is a just on of Sir Joshua Reynolds, that though men of ordi- nts may be highly satisfied with their own produc- en of true genius never are. Whatever be their sub- y always seem to themselves to fall short of it, even ey seem to others most to excel. And for this reason, e they have a certain sublime sense of perfection, ther men are strangers to, and which they themselves performances are not able to exemplify. Your servant, ia! I little thought of seeing you when I began; but ave popped in you are welcome.

I wrote last, I was a little inclined to send you a

copy of verses entitled the Modern Patriot, but was not qu pleased with a line or two, which I found it difficult mend, therefore did not. At night I read Mr. Burke's spee in the newspaper, and was so well pleased with his propos for a reformation, and with the temper in which he ma them, that I began to think better of his cause, and bur my verses. Such is the lot of the man who writes upon t subject of the day; the aspect of affairs changes in an ho or two, and his opinion with it; what was just and well-d served satire in the morning, in the evening becomes a libe the author commences his own judge, and while he condem with unrelenting severity what he so lately approved, is son to find that he has laid his leaf-gold upon touchwood, whi crumbled away under his fingers. Alas! what can I do wi my wit? I have not enough to do great things with, a these little things are so fugitive, that while a man catches the subject, he is only filling his hand with smoke. I must d with it as I do with my linnet; I keep him for the most part i a cage, but now and then set open the door, that he may whi about the room a little, and then shut him up again. M whisking wit has produced the following, the subject of whic is more important than the manner in which I have treated i seems to imply, but a fable may speak truth, and all trut is sterling; I only premise, that in a philosophical tract i the Register, I found it asserted that the glow-worm is th nightingale's food.[1]

Have you heard? who has not? for a recommendatory ad vertisement of it is already published;—that a certain kinsm of your humble servant's has written a tract, now in the pre to prove polygamy a divine institution! A plurality of wiv is intended, but not of husbands. The end proposed by th author is to remedy the prevailing practice of seduction by making the female delinquent *ipso facto* the lawful wi of the male. An officer of a regiment, part of which quartered here, gave one of the soldiers leave to be dru six weeks, in hopes of curing him by satiety: he *was* dru six weeks, and is so still, as often as he can find an opp tunity. One vice may swallow up another, but no coroner

[1] This Letter contained the fable of the Nightingale and Glowworm.

[2] In the original letter it is *adultery*,—but I have thought it rig *correct* an obvious mistake in writing.

state of Ethics ever brought in his verdict, when a vice
l, that it was—*felo de se.*
'hey who value the man are sorry for his book: the rest say,

Solvuntur risu tabulæ, tu missus abidis

'hanks for all you have done, and all you intend; the bio-
ɔhy will be particularly welcome. Yours, W. C.

TO MRS. NEWTON.

:AR MADAM, March 4, 1780.

communicate surprise is almost, perhaps quite, as agreeable
ɔ receive it. This is my present motive for writing to you
er than to Mr. Newton. He would be pleased with hear-
from me, but he would not be surprised at it; you see,
efore, I am selfish upon the present occasion, and princi-
y consult my own gratification. Indeed, if I consult yours,
ould be silent, for I have no such budget as the minister's
ished and stuffed with ways and means for every emerg-
y, and shall find it difficult, perhaps, to raise supplies even
a short epistle.
ou have observed in common conversation, that the man
ı coughs and blows his nose the oftenest, (I mean if he has
a cold,) does it because he has nothing to say. Even so it
ı letter-writing: a long preface, such as mine, is an ugly
ıptom, and always forebodes great sterility in the following
es.
'he vicarage-house became a melancholy object, as soon as
. Newton had left it; when you left it, it became more me-
:holy: now it is actually occupied by another family, even
unnot look at it without being shocked. As I walked in
garden this evening, I saw the smoke issue from the study
mney, and said to myself, that used to be a sign that Mr.
rton was there; but it is so no longer. The walls of the
ıse know nothing of the change that has taken place; the
t of the chamber-door sounds just as it used to do; and
en Mr. Page goes upstairs, for aught I know, or ever shall
rw, the fall of his foot could hardly, perhaps, be distin-
shed from that of Mr. Newton. But Mr. Newton's foot
l never be heard upon that staircase again. These reflect-
s, and such as these, occurred to me upon the occasion, and
ugh in many respects I have no more sensibility left than
re is in brick and mortar, yet I am not permitted to be

quite unfeeling upon this subject. If I were in a condition to leave Olney too, I certainly would not stay in it. It is no attachment to the place that binds me here, but an unfitness for every other. I lived in it once, but now I am buried in it, and have no business with the world on the outside of my sepulchre; my appearance would startle them, and theirs would be shocking to me.

Such are my thoughts about the matter. Others are more deeply affected, and by more weighty considerations, having been many years the objects of a ministry which they had reason to account themselves happy in the possession of; they fear they shall find themselves great sufferers by the alteration that has taken place; they would have had reason to fear it in any case. But Mr. Newton's successor does not bring with him the happiest presages, so that in the present state of things they have double reason for their fears. Though I can never be the better for Mr. Page. Mr. Page shall never be the worse for me. If his conduct shall even justify the worst apprehensions that have been formed of his character, it is no personal concern of mine. But this I can venture to say, that if he is not spotless, his spots will be seen, and the plainer, because he comes after Mr. Newton.

We were concerned at your account of Robert, and have little doubt but he will shuffle himself out of his place. Where he will find another, is a question not to be resolved by those who recommend him to this. I wrote him a long letter, a day or two after the receipt of yours, but I am afraid it was only clapping a blister upon the crown of a wig-block.

My respects attend Mr. Newton and yourself, accompanied with much affection for you both.

Yours, dear Madam, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 16, 1780.

If I had had the horns of a snail, I should have drawn them in the moment I saw the reason of your epistolary brevity, because I felt it too. May your seven reams be multiplied into fourteen, till your letters become truly Lacedæmonian, and are reduced to a single syllable. Though I shall be a sufferer by the effect, I shall rejoice in the cause. You are naturally formed for business, and such a head as yours can never have

nuch of it. Though my predictions have been fulfilled in instances, I do not plume myself much upon my sagacity; ıse it required but little to foresee that Thurlow would be cellor, and that you would have a crowded office. As to rest of my connexions, there, too, I have given proof of l foresight, with not a jot more reason for vanity. Any · might see that they were too much like myself to be ı for any thing; disqualified by temper, and unfurnished abilities to be useful either to themselves or others.

› use the phrase of all who ever wrote upon the state of ›pe, the political horizon is dark indeed. The cloud has . thickening, and the thunder advancing many years. The n now seems to be vertical, and threatens to burst upon land, as if, with the next clap, it would shake all to ›s. I did not know, (for I know nothing but what I learn ı the General Evening,) that there was a deliberate purpose he part of government, to set up the throne of despotism. ıat is the case, no doubt but the standard of opposition flame against it, till it has consumed to ashes the devisers project that in this country is sure to terminate in the ruin hose that form it. Alas, of what use is history, and why ld kings be taught to read, if they read to so little pur- ? As for me, I am no Quaker, except where military ›ers are in question, and there I am much of the same mind . an honest man, who, when he was forced into the service, ared he would not fight, and gave this reason—because he nothing worth fighting for. You will say, perhaps, Is liberty worth a struggle? True: but will success insure › me? Might I not, like the Americans, emancipate my- from one master, only to serve a score, and, with laurels n my brow, sigh for my former chains again?

[any thanks for your kind invitation. Ditto to Mrs. Hill, the seeds—unexpected, and therefore the more welcome. ıve not a leg that is not tied to Olney; and if they were all berty, not one of them all would hop to London. The ıght of it distresses me; the sight of it would craze me. ou gave me great pleasure, by what you say of my uncle. motto shall be

Hic ver perpetuum atque alienis mensibus æstas.

remember the time when I have been kept waking, by the

fear that he would die before me; but now, I think, I grow old first.

Yours, my dear friend, affectionately, W.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

March 18, 17

I AM obliged to you for the communication of your co pondence with ——. It was impossible for any man, of temper whatever, and however wedded to his own purpos resent so gentle and friendly an exhortation as you sent Men of lively imaginations are not often remarkable for dity of judgement. They have generally strong passion bias it, and are led far away from their proper road, in suit of pretty phantoms of their own creating. No law did or can effect what he has ascribed to that of Moses; reserved for Mercy to subdue the corrupt inclinations of kind, which threatenings and penalties, through the depr of the heart, have always had a tendency rather to inflam

The love of power seems as natural to kings, as the d of liberty is to their subjects; the excess of either is vic and tends to the ruin of both. There are many, I believe, wish the present corrupt state of things dissolved, in hope the pure primitive constitution will spring up from the r But it is not for man by himself man, to bring order o confusion; the progress from one to the other is not nat much less necessary, and without the intervention of d aid, impossible; and they who are for making the hazar experiment, would certainly find themselves disappointed.

Affectionately yours, W.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 28, 17

I HAVE heard nothing more from Mr. Newton upon the su you mention; but I dare say that, having been given to e the benefit of your nomination in behalf of his nephew, he depends upon it. His obligations to Mr. Thornton have so numerous, and so weighty, that though he has, in a fe stances, prevailed upon himself to recommend an object and then to his patronage, he has very sparingly, if at all erted his interest with him in behalf of his own relations. best way to reconcile yourself to this application of

bounty, will be to consider that your principal and main intention in it is to oblige your mother. As to the boy—

"To whom related, or by whom begot,"

is a very unimportant part of the subject.

With respect to the advice you are required to give to a young lady, that she may be properly instructed in the manner of keeping the sabbath, you are so well qualified for the task yourself, that it is impossible you should need any assistance; at least it is hardly possible that I should afford you any, who consider myself as no longer interested in the question. As you desire it, however, and I am not willing to refuse you the little that is in my power, I just subjoin a few hints that have occurred to me upon the occasion; not because I think you want them, but because it would seem unkind to withhold them. The sabbath then, I think may be considered, first, as a commandment, no less binding upon modern Christians than upon ancient Jews; because the spiritual people amongst them did not think it enough to abstain from manual occupations upon that day, but, entering more deeply into the meaning of the precept, allotted those hours they took from the world to the cultivation of holiness in their own souls,—which ever was, and ever will be, a duty incumbent upon all who ever heard of a sabbath, and is of perpetual obligation both upon Jews and Christians; (the commandment, therefore, enjoins it; the prophets have also enforced it; and in many instances, both scriptural and modern, the breach of it has been punished with a providential and judicial severity that may make by-standers tremble): secondly, as a privilege, which you well know how to dilate upon, better than I can tell you: thirdly, as a sign of that covenant by which believers are entitled to a rest that yet remaineth: fourthly, as the *sine quâ non* of the Christian character; and upon this head I should guard against being misunderstood to mean no more than two attendances upon public worship, which is a form complied with by thousands who never kept a sabbath in their lives. Consistency is necessary, to give substance and solidity to the whole. To sanctify the day at church, and to trifle it away out of church, is profanation, and vitiates all. After all, I could ask my catechumen one short question—"Do you love the day, or do you not? If you love it, you will never inquire how far you may safely deprive yourself of the enjoyment of it. If

you do not love it, and you find yourself obliged in conscience to acknowledge it, that is an alarming symptom, and ought to make you tremble. If you do not love it, then it is a weariness to you, and you wish it was over. The ideas of labour and rest are not more opposite to each other than the idea of a sabbath, and that dislike and disgust with which it fills the souls of thousands to be obliged to keep it. It is worse than bodily labour, more fatiguing than the drudgery of an ass." W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, April 6, 1780.

I NEVER was, any more than yourself, a friend to pluralities; they are generally found in the hands of the avaricious, whose insatiable hunger after preferment proves them unworthy of any at all. They attend much to the regular payment of their dues, but not at all to the spiritual interests of their parishioners. Having forgot their duty, or never known it, they differ in nothing from the laity, except their outward garb, and their exclusive right to the desk and pulpit. But when pluralities seek the man, instead of being sought by him; and when the man is honest, conscientious, and pious; careful to employ a substitute in those respects like himself; and, not contented with this, will see with his own eyes that the concerns of his parishes are decently and diligently administered; in that case, considering the present dearth of such characters in the ministry, I think it an event advantageous to the people, and much to be desired by all who regret the great and apparent want of sobriety and earnestness among the clergy. A man who does not seek a living merely as a pecuniary emolument, has no need, in my judgement, to refuse one because it is so. He means to do his duty, and by doing it he earns his wages. The two Ramsdens being contiguous to each other, and falling easily under the care of one pastor, and both so near to Stock that you can visit them without difficulty, as often as you please, I see no reasonable objection, nor does your mother. As to the wry-mouthed sneers and illiberal misconstructions of the censorious, I know no better shield to guard you against them, than what you are already furnished with,—a clear and unoffended conscience.

The salmon came safe and punctual to its assignation; it

served us for two dinners and six suppers, was remarkably fresh and fine. Item, the lobster.

I am obliged to you for what you said upon the subject of book-buying, and am very fond of availing myself of another man's pocket, when I can do it creditably to myself, and without injury to him. Amusements are necessary, in a retirement like mine, especially in such a state of mind as I labour under. The necessity of amusement makes me sometimes write verses; it made me a carpenter, a birdcage maker, a gardener; and has lately taught me to draw, and to draw too with such surprising proficiency in the art, considering my total ignorance of it two months ago, that when I show your mother my productions, she is all admiration and applause.

You need never fear the communication of what you entrust to us in confidence. You know your mother's delicacy in this point sufficiently; and as for me, I once wrote a Connoisseur upon the subject of secret keeping, and from that day to this I believe I have never divulged one.

We were much pleased with Mr. Newton's application to you for a charity sermon, and with what he said upon that subject in his last letter, "that he was glad of an opportunity to give you that proof of his regard."

Believe me yours, with the customary, but not therefore unmeaning addition of love to all under your roof. Your mother sends hers, which being maternal, is put up in a separate parcel. W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, April 16, 1780.

SINCE I wrote my last we have had a visit from ———. I did not feel myself vehemently disposed to receive him with that complaisance, from which a stranger generally infers that he is welcome. By his manner, which was rather bold than easy, I judged that there was no occasion for it, and that it was a trifle which, if he did not meet with, neither would he feel the want of. He has the air of a travelled man, but not of a travelled gentleman; is quite delivered from that reserve which is so common an ingredient in the English character, yet does not open himself gently and gradually, as men of polite behaviour do, but bursts upon you all at once. He talks very loud, and when our poor little robins hear a great noise,

they are immediately seized with an ambition to surpass it the increase of their vociferation occasioned an increase of his, and his in return acted as a stimulus upon theirs; neither side entertained a thought of giving up the contest, which became continually more interesting to our ears, during the whole visit. The birds, however, survived it, and so did we. They perhaps flatter themselves they gained a complete victory, but I believe Mr. ——— could have killed them both in another hour. W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

DEAR SIR, May 3, 1780.

You indulge me in such a variety of subjects, and allow me such a latitude of excursion in this scribbling employment, that I have no excuse for silence. I am much obliged to you for swallowing such boluses as I send you, for the sake of my gilding, and verily believe that I am the only man alive, from whom they would be welcome to a palate like yours. I wish I could make them more splendid than they are, more alluring to the eye, at least, if not more pleasing to the taste; but my leaf gold is tarnished, and has received such a tinge from the vapours that are ever brooding over my mind, that I think it no small proof of your partiality to me, that you will read my letters. I am not fond of longwinded metaphors; I have always observed, that they halt at the latter end of their progress, and so do mine. I deal much in ink indeed, but not such ink as is employed by poets, and writers of essays. Mine is a harmless fluid, and guilty of no deceptions but such as may prevail without the least injury to the person imposed on. I draw mountains, valleys, woods, and streams, and ducks, and dab-chicks. I admire them myself, and Mrs. Unwin admires them; and her praise, and my praise put together, are fame enough for me. Oh! I could spend whole days and moonlight nights in feeding upon a lovely prospect! My eyes drink the rivers as they flow. If every human being upon earth could think for one quarter of an hour as I have done for many years, there might perhaps be many miserable men among them, but not an unawakened one could be found from the arctic to the antarctic circle. At present, the difference between them and me is greatly to their advantage. I delight in baubles, and know them to be so; for rested in, and

viewed without a reference to their Author, what is the earth,—what are the planets,—what is the sun itself but a bauble? Better for a man never to have seen them, or to see them with the eyes of a brute, stupid and unconscious of what he beholds, than not to be able to say, "The Maker of all these wonders is my friend!" Their eyes have never been opened, to see that they are trifles; mine have been, and will be till they are closed for ever. They think a fine estate, a large conservatory, a hothouse rich as a West Indian garden, things of consequence; visit them with pleasure, and muse upon them with ten times more. I am pleased with a frame of four lights, doubtful whether the few pines it contains will ever be worth a farthing; amuse myself with a greenhouse which Lord Bute's gardener could take upon his back, and walk away with; and when I have paid it the accustomed visit, and watered it, and given it air, I say to myself—"This is not mine, it is a plaything lent me for the present; I must leave it soon." W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Olney, May 6, 1780.

I AM much obliged to you for your speedy answer to my queries. I know less of the law than a country attorney, yet sometimes I think I have almost as much business. My former connexion with the profession has got wind; and though I earnestly profess, and protest, and proclaim it abroad that I know nothing of the matter, they cannot be persuaded to believe, that a head once endued with a legal periwig can ever be deficient in those natural endowments it is supposed to cover. I have had the good fortune to be once or twice in the right, which, added to the cheapness of a gratuitous counsel, has advanced my credit to a degree I never expected to attain in the capacity of a lawyer. Indeed, if two of the wisest in the science of jurisprudence may give opposite opinions on the same point, which does not unfrequently happen, it seems to be a matter of indifference whether a man answers by rule or at a venture. He that stumbles upon the right side of the question is just as useful to his client as he that arrives at the same end by regular approaches, and is conducted to the mark he aims at by the greatest authorities.

* * * * * * *

These violent attacks of a distemper so often fatal, are very

alarming to all who esteem and respect the Chancellor as he deserves. A life of confinement, and of anxious attention to important objects, where the habit is bilious to such a terrible degree, threatens to be but a short one; and I wish he may not be made a text for men of reflection to moralize upon, affording a conspicuous instance of the transient and fading nature of all human accomplishments and attainments.

Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May 8, 1780.

My scribbling humour has of late been entirely absorbed in the passion for landscape drawing. It is a most amusing art, and like every other art, requires much practice and attention.

Nil sine multo
Vita labore dedit mortalibus.

Excellence is providentially placed beyond the reach of indolence, that success may be the reward of industry, and that idleness may be punished with obscurity and disgrace. So long as I am pleased with an employment, I am capable of unwearied application, because my feelings are all of the intense kind. I never received a *little* pleasure from any thing in my life; if I am delighted, it is in the extreme. The unhappy consequence of this temperature is, that my attachment to any occupation seldom outlives the novelty of it. That nerve of my imagination that feels the touch of any particular amusement, twangs under the energy of the pressure with so much vehemence, that it soon becomes sensible of weariness and fatigue. Hence I draw an unfavourable prognostic, and expect that I shall shortly be constrained to look out for something else. Then perhaps I may string the lyre again, and be able to comply with your demand.

Now for the visit you propose to pay us, and propose *not* to pay us; the hope of which plays about upon your paper, like a jack-o-lantern upon the ceiling. This is no mean simile, for Virgil (you remember) uses it. It is here, it is there, it vanishes, it returns, it dazzles you, a cloud interposes and it is gone. However just the comparison, I hope you will contrive to spoil it, and that your final determination will be to come. As to the masons you expect, bring them with you;—*bring* brick, bring mortar, bring every thing that would op-

pose itself to your journey;—all shall be welcome. I have a greenhouse that is too small, come and enlarge it; build me a pinery; repair the garden wall, that has great need of your assistance; do any thing; you cannot do too much; so far from thinking you and your train troublesome, we shall rejoice to see you, upon these or upon any other terms you can propose. But to be serious,—you will do well to consider that a long summer is before you; that the party will not have such another opportunity to meet this great while; that you may finish your masonry long enough before winter, though you should not begin this month, but that you cannot always find your brother and sister Powley at Olney. These, and some other considerations, such as the desire we have to see you, and the pleasure we expect from seeing you all together, may, and, I think, ought to overcome your scruples.

From a general recollection of Lord Clarendon's History of the Rebellion, I thought (and I remember I told you so) that there was a striking resemblance between that period and the present. But I am now reading, and have read three volumes of Hume's History, one of which is engrossed entirely by that subject. There I see reason to alter my opinion, and the seeming resemblance has disappeared upon a more particular information. Charles succeeded to a long train of arbitrary princes, whose subjects had tamely acquiesced in the despotism of their masters, till their privileges were all forgot. He did but tread in their steps, and exemplify the principles in which he had been brought up, when he oppressed his people. But just at that time, unhappily for the monarch, the subject began to see, and to see that he had a right to property and freedom. This marks a sufficient difference between the disputes of that day and the present. But there was another main cause of that rebellion, which at this time does not operate at all. The king was devoted to the hierarchy; his subjects were puritans and would not bear it. Every circumstance of ecclesiastical order and discipline was an abomination to them, and in his esteem an indispensable duty. And though at last he was obliged to give up many things, he would not abolish episcopacy: and till that were done his concessions could have no conciliating effect. These two concurring causes were indeed sufficient to set three kingdoms in a flame. But they subsist not now, nor any other, I hope, notwithstanding the

bustle made by the patriots, equal to the production of such terrible events. Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER.

MY DEAR COUSIN, May 10, 1780.

I DO not write to comfort you; that office is not likely to be well performed by one who has no comfort for himself; nor to comply with an impertinent ceremony, which in general might well be spared upon such occasions: but because I would not seem indifferent to the concerns of those I have so much reason to esteem and love. If I did not sorrow for your brother's death, I should expect that nobody would for mine; when I knew him, he was much beloved, and I doubt not continued to be so. To live and die together is the lot of a few happy families, who hardly know what a separation means, and one sepulchre serves them all; but the ashes of our kindred are dispersed indeed. Whether the American gulf has swallowed up any other of my relations, I know not; it has made many mourners.

Believe me, my dear cousin, though after a long silence, which perhaps nothing less than the present concern could have prevailed with me to interrupt, as much as ever,

Your affectionate kinsman, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May 10, 1780.

IF authors could have lived to adjust and authenticate their own text, a commentator would have been an useless creature. For instance—if Dr. Bentley had found, or opined that he had found, the word *tube* where it seemed to present itself to you, and had judged the subject worthy of his critical acumen, he would either have justified the corrupt reading, or have substituted some invention of his own, in defence of which he would have exerted all his polemical abilities, and have quarrelled with half the literati in Europe. Then suppose the writer himself, as in the present case, to interpose with a gentle whisper thus—"If you look again, Doctor, you will perceive that what appears to you to be *tube*, is neither more nor less than the simple monosyllable *ink*, but I wrote it in great haste, and the want of sufficient precision in the character has occasioned your mistake: *you* will be especially

satisfied when you see the sense[1] elucidated by the explanation."—But I question whether the doctor would quit his ground, or allow any author to be a competent judge in his own case. The world, however, would acquiesce immediately, and vote the critic useless.

James Andrews, who is my Michael Angelo, pays me many compliments on my success in the art of drawing, but I have not yet the vanity to think myself qualified to furnish your apartment. If I should ever attain to the degree of self-opinion requisite to such an undertaking, I shall labour at it with pleasure. I can only say, though I hope not with the affected modesty of the above-mentioned Dr. Bentley, who said the same thing,

Me quoque dicunt
Vatem pastores. Sed non Ego credulus illis.

A crow, rook, or raven, has built a nest in one of the young elm trees, at the side of Mrs. Aspray's orchard. In the violent storm that blew yesterday morning, I saw it agitated to a degree that seemed to threaten its immediate destruction, and versified the following thoughts upon the occasion[2].

W. C.

TO MRS. NEWTON.

DEAR MADAM, June, 1780.

When I write to Mr. Newton, he answers me by letter; when I write to you, you answer me in fish. I return you many thanks for the mackerel and lobster. They assured me in terms as intelligible as pen and ink could have spoken, that you still remember *Orchard-side;* and though they never spoke in their lives, and it was still less to be expected from them that they should speak, being dead, they gave us an assurance of your affection that corresponds exactly with that which Mr. Newton expresses towards us in all his letters.—For my own part, I never in my life began a letter more at a venture than the present. It is possible that I may finish it, but perhaps more than probable that I shall not. I have had several indifferent nights, and the wind is easterly; two circumstances so unfavourable to me in all my occupations, but especially that of writing, that it was with the greatest difficulty I could even bring myself to attempt it.

You have never yet perhaps been made acquainted with the

[1] The passage alluded to seems to be in his letter of May 3, p. 250.
[2] *Cowper's Fable of the Raven* concluded this letter.

unfortunate Tom Freeman's misadventure. [illegible] and his wife returning from Hanslip fair, were coming down Weston Lane; to wit, themselves, their horse, and their great wooden panniers, at ten o'clock at night. The horse having a lively imagination, and very weak nerves, fancied he either saw or heard something, but has never been able to say what. A sudden fright will impart activity, and a momentary vigour, even to lameness itself. Accordingly, he started, and sprung from the middle of the road to the side of it, with such surprising alacrity, that he dismounted the gingerbread baker and his gingerbread wife in a moment. Not contented with this effort, nor thinking himself yet out of danger, he proceeded as fast as he could to a full gallop, rushed against the gate at the bottom of the lane, and opened it for himself, without perceiving that there was any gate there. Still he galloped, and with a velocity and momentum continually increasing, till he arrived in Olney. I had been in bed about ten minutes, when I heard the most uncommon and unaccountable noise that can be imagined. It was, in fact, occasioned by the clattering of tin pattypans and a Dutch-oven against the sides of the panniers. Much gingerbread was picked up in the street, and Mr. Lucy's windows were broken all to pieces. Had this been all, it would have been a comedy, but we learned the next morning, that the poor woman's collar-bone was broken, and she has hardly been able to resume her occupation since.

What is added on the other side, if I could have persuaded myself to write sooner, would have reached you sooner; 'tis about ten days old. * * * * * * *

"The Doves [1]."

The male Dove was smoking a pipe, and the female Dove was sewing, while she delivered herself as above. This little circumstance may lead you perhaps to guess what pair I had in my eye.

Yours, dear Madam, WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 8, 1780.

It is possible I might have indulged myself in the pleasure of writing to you, without waiting for a letter from you, but for a reason which you will not easily guess. Your mother com-

[1] Vol. v. p. 239.

municated to me the satisfaction you expressed in my correspondence, that you thought me entertaining and clever, and so forth:—now you must know, I love praise dearly, especially from the judicious, and those who have so much delicacy themselves as not to offend mine in giving it. But then, I found this consequence attending, or likely to attend the eulogium you bestowed;—if my friend thought me witty before, he shall think me ten times more witty hereafter;—where I joked once, I will joke five times, and for one sensible remark I will send him a dozen. Now this foolish vanity would have spoiled me quite, and would have made me as disgusting a letter-writer as Pope, who seems to have thought that unless a sentence was well turned, and every period pointed with some conceit, it was not worth the carriage. Accordingly he is to me, except in very few instances, the most disagreeable maker of epistles that ever I met with. I was willing, therefore, to wait till the impression your commendation had made upon the foolish part of me was worn off, that I might scribble away as usual, and write my uppermost thoughts, and those only.

You are better skilled in ecclesiastical law than I am. Mrs. Powley desires me to inform her, whether a parson can be obliged to take an apprentice. For some of her husband's opposers at Dewsbury threaten to clap one upon him. Now I think it would be rather hard, if clergymen, who are not allowed to exercise any handicraft whatever, should be subject to such an imposition. If Mr. Powley was a cordwainer, or a breeches-maker, all the week, and a preacher only on Sundays, it would seem reasonable enough, in that case, that he should take an apprentice, if he chose it. But even then, in my poor judgement, he ought to be left to his option. If they mean by an apprentice, a pupil, whom they will oblige him to hew into a parson, and after chipping away the block that hides the minister within, to qualify him to stand erect in a pulpit,—that indeed is another consideration.—But still, we live in a free country, and I cannot bring myself even to suspect that an English divine can possibly be liable to such compulsion. Ask your uncle, however; for he is wiser in these things than either of us.

I thank you for your two inscriptions, and like the last the best; the thought is just and fine, but the two last lines are sadly damaged by the monkish jingle of *peperit* and *reperit*. I

have not yet translated them, nor do I promise to do it, though at some idle hour perhaps I may. In return, I send you a translation of a simile in the Paradise Lost. Not having that poem at hand, I cannot refer you to the book and page, but you may hunt for it, if you think it worth your while. It begins—

> "So when, from mountain tops, the dusky clouds
> Ascending," &c.

> Quales aërii montis de vertice nubes
> Cum surgunt, et jam Boreæ tumida ora quiêrunt,
> Cælum hilares abdit, spissâ caligine, vultus:
> Tùm si jucundo tandem sol prodeat ore,
> Et croceo montes et pascua lumine tingat.
> Gaudent omnia, aves mulcent concentibus agros,
> Balatuque ovium colles, vallesque resultant.

If you spy any fault in my Latin, tell me, for I am sometimes in doubt; but, as I told you when you was here, I have not a Latin book in the world to consult, or correct a mistake by; and some years have passed since I was a schoolboy.

An English Versification of a Thought that popped into my Head about two Months since.

> Sweet stream! that winds through yonder glade—
> Apt emblem of a virtuous maid!—
> Silent, and chaste, she steals along,
> Far from the world's gay, busy throng;
> With gentle, yet prevailing force,
> Intent upon her destin'd course:
> Graceful, and useful, all she does,
> Blessing, and bless'd, where'er she goes:
> Pure-bosom'd, as that watery glass
> And Heaven reflected in her face!

Now this is not so exclusively applicable to a maiden, as to be the sole property of your sister Shuttleworth. If you look at Mrs. Unwin, you will see that she has not lost her right to this just praise by marrying you.

Your mother sends her love to all, and mine comes jogging along by the side of it. Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

DEAR SIR, June 12, 1780.

We accept it as an effort of your friendship, that you could prevail with yourself, in a time of such terror and distress, to send us repeated accounts of yours and Mrs. Newton's welfare;

you supposed, with reason enough, that we should be apprehensive for your safety, situated as you were, apparently, within the reach of so much danger. We rejoice that you have escaped it all, and that, except the anxiety which you must have felt, both for yourselves and others, you have suffered nothing upon this dreadful occasion. A metropolis in flames, and a nation in ruins, are subjects of contemplation for such a mind as yours that will leave a lasting impression behind them. It is well that the design died in the execution, and will be buried, I hope never to rise again, in the ashes of its own combustion. There is a melancholy pleasure in looking back upon such a scene, arising from a comparison of possibilities with facts; the enormous bulk of the intended mischief with the abortive and partial accomplishment of it. Much was done, more indeed than could have been supposed practicable in a well-regulated city, not unfurnished with a military force for its protection. But surprise and astonishment seem at first to have struck every nerve of the police with a palsy, and to have disarmed government of all its powers.

I congratulate you upon the wisdom that withheld you from entering yourself a member of the Protestant association. Your friends who did so have reason enough to regret their doing it, even though they should never be called upon. Innocent as they are, and they who know them cannot doubt of their being perfectly so, it is likely to bring an odium on the profession they make, that will not soon be forgotten. Neither is it possible for a quiet, inoffensive man, to discover, on a sudden, that his zeal has carried him into such company, without being to the last degree shocked at his imprudence. *Their* religion was an honourable mantle, like that of Elijah; but the majority wore cloaks of Guy Fawkes's time, and meant nothing so little as what they pretended. W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

REVEREND AND DEAR WILLIAM, June 18, 1780.

THE affairs of kingdoms, and the concerns of individuals, are variegated alike with the chequer-work of joy and sorrow. The news of a great acquisition in America has succeeded to terrible tumults in London; and the beams of prosperity are now playing upon the smoke of that conflagration which so lately terrified the *whole land*. These sudden changes, which

are matter of every man's observation, and may therefo
be reasonably expected, serve to hold up the chin of
dency above water, and preserve mankind in general
sin and misery of accounting existence a burden n
endured;—an evil we should be sure to encounter, if
not warranted to look for a bright reverse of o
afflictive experiences.

We are obliged to you for your early communicati
surrender of Charles Town, and rejoice with you in
which, if my political spectacles do not deceive me,
to bring the rebellion to a speedy end. The Spania
sick of the war at the very commencement of it; an
that, by this time, the French themselves begin to fin
selves a little indisposed, if not desirous of peace, wh
restless and meddling temper of theirs is incapable
ing for its own sake. But is it true, that this detest
was an egg laid in France and hatched in London, und
fluence of French corruption?—*Nam te scire, deos
propiùs contingis, oportet.* The offspring has the fea
such a parent; and yet, without the clearest proof of
I would not willingly charge upon a civilized nation
haps the most barbarous would abhor the thought
sooner saw the surmise however in the paper, than
diately began to write Latin verses upon the occasio
odd effect," you will say, "of such a circumstance:"-
effect, nevertheless, that whatever has, at any time, m
passions whether pleasantly or otherwise, has always
me; were I to express what I feel upon such occasions
it would be verbose, inflated, and disgusting. I there
recourse to verse, as a suitable vehicle for the most
expressions my thoughts suggest to me. What I have
I did not write so much for the comfort of the Englis
the mortification of the French. You will immedia
ceive, therefore, that I have been labouring in vain,
this bouncing explosion is likely to spend itself in the
I have no means of circulating what follows throug
French territories; and unless that, or something like
done, my indignation will be entirely fruitless. Tell
can convey it into Sartine's pocket, or who will lay it
desk for me. But read it first, and unless you think i
enough to sting the Gaul to the quick, burn it.

In seditionem horrendam, corruptelis Gallicis, ut fertur, Londini nuper exortam.

Perfida, crudelis, victa et lymphata furore,
Non armis, laurum Gallia fraude petit.
Venalem pretio plebem conducit, et urit
Undique privatas pátriciasque domos.
Nequicquàm conata suâ, fœdissima sperat
Posse tamen nostrâ nos superare manu.
Gallia, vana struis! Precibus nunc utere! Vinces,
Nam mites timidis, supplicibusque sumus.

I have lately exercised my ingenuity in contriving an exercise for yours, and have composed a riddle, which, if it does not make you laugh before you have solved it, will probably do it afterwards. I would transcribe it now, but am really so fatigued with writing, that unless I knew you had a quinsy, and that a fit of laughter might possibly save your life, I could not prevail with myself to do it.

What could you possibly mean, slender as you are, by sallying out upon your two-walking-sticks at two in the morning, into the midst of such a tumult? We admire your prowess, but cannot commend your prudence.

Our love attends you all, collectively and individually.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 22, 1780.

A WORD or two in answer to two or three questions of yours, which I have hitherto taken no notice of. I am not in a scribbling mood, and shall therefore make no excursions to amuse either myself or you. The needful will be as much as I can manage at present; the playful must wait for another opportunity.

I thank you for your offer of Robertson; but I have more reading upon my hands at this present writing than I shall get rid of in a twelvemonth:—and this moment recollect that I have seen it already. He is an author that I admire much, with one exception, that I think his style is too laboured. Hume, as an historian, pleases me more.

I have just read enough of the *Biographia Britannica*, to say, that I have tasted it, and have no doubt but I shall like it. I am pretty much in the garden at this season of the year, so read but little. In summer-time I am as giddy-headed as a boy, and

can settle to nothing. Winter condenses me, and makes me lumpish and sober; and then I can read all day long.

For the same reasons, I have no need of the landscapes at present; when I want them I will renew my application, and repeat the description, but it will hardly be before October.

I congratulate you upon a duplicate of Ramsden's. As your charge is become twofold, may your satisfaction be so too. Mine is sure to be doubled, because you have promised me a present of salmon.

Before I arose this morning, I composed the three following stanzas: I send them because I like them pretty well myself; and if you should not, you must accept this handsome compliment as an amends for their deficiencies. You may print the lines, if you judge them worth it[1].

I have only time to add love, &c., and my two initials.

W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 23, 1780.

YOUR reflections upon the state of London, the sins and enormities of that great city, while you had a distant view of it from Greenwich, seem to have been prophetic of the heavy stroke that fell upon it just after. Man often prophesies without knowing it; a spirit speaks by him which is not his own, though he does not at that time suspect that he is under the influence of any other. Did he foresee what is always foreseen by Him who dictates what he supposes to be his own, he would suffer by anticipation, as well as by consequence; and wish perhaps as ardently for the happy ignorance, to which he is at present so much indebted, as some have foolishly and inconsiderately done for a knowledge that would be but another name for misery.

And why have I said all this? especially to you, who have hitherto said it to me:—not because I had the least desire of informing a wiser man than myself, but because the observation was naturally suggested by the recollection of your letter, and that letter, though not the last, happened to be uppermost in my mind. I can compare this mind of mine to nothing that resembles it more, than to a board that is under the carpenter's plane, (I mean while I am writing to you,) the shav-

[1] Verses on the burning of Lord Mansfield's library, &c.

ings are my uppermost thoughts; after a few strokes of the tool, it acquires a new surface; this again, upon a repetition of his task, he takes off, and a new surface still succeeds: whether the shavings of the present day will be worth your acceptance, I know not; I am unfortunately made neither of cedar nor of mahogany, but *Trancus frutus, [illegible]*; consequently, though I should be planed till I am as thin as a wafer, it will be but rubbish to the last.

It is not strange that you should be the subject of a false report; for the sword of slander, like that of war, devours one as well as another: and a blameless character is particularly delicious to its unsparing appetite. But that you should be the object of such a report, you who meddle less with the designs of government than almost any man that lives under it, this is strange indeed. It is well, however, when they who account it good sport to traduce the reputation of another, invent a story that refutes itself. I wonder they do not always endeavour to accommodate their fiction to the real character of the person; their tale would then at least have an air of probability, and it might cost a peaceable good man much more trouble to disprove it. But perhaps it would not be easy to discern what part of your conduct lies more open to such an attempt than another; or what it is that you either say or do, at any time, that presents a fair opportunity to the most ingenious slanderer, to slip in a falsehood between your words, or actions, that shall seem to be of a piece with either. You hate compliment, I know; but by your leave this is not one—it is a truth:—worse and worse! now I have praised you indeed—well, you must thank yourself for it; it was absolutely done without the least intention on my part, and proceeded from a pen that, as far as I can remember, was never guilty of flattery since I knew how to hold it. He that slanders me, paints me blacker than I am, and he that flatters me, whiter—they both daub me; and when I look in the glass of conscience, I see myself disguised by both: I had as lief my tailor should sew gingerbread nuts on my coat instead of buttons, as that any man should call my Bristol stone a diamond. The tailor's trick would not at all embellish my suit, nor the flatterers make me at all the richer. I never make a present to my friend, of what I dislike myself. Ergo, (I have reached the conclusion at last,) I did not mean to flatter you.

We have sent a petition to Lord Dartmouth, by this post praying him to interfere in parliament in behalf of the poor lace-makers. I say we, because I have signed it; Mr. G. drew it up, Mr. ——— did not think it grammatical, therefore he would not sign it. Yet I think Priscian himself would have pardoned the manner for the sake of the matter. I dare say if his lordship does not comply with the prayer of it, it will not be because he thinks it of more consequence to write grammatically, than that the poor should eat, but for some better reason.

My love to all under your roof. Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

July 2, 1780.

CARISSIME, I am glad of your confidence, and have reason to hope I shall never abuse it. If you trust me with a secret, I am hermetically sealed; and if you call for the exercise of my judgement, such as it is, I am never freakish or wanton in the use of it, much less mischievous and malignant. Critics, I believe, do not often stand so clear of these vices as I do. I like your epitaph, except that I doubt the propriety of the word *immaturus;* which, I think, is rather applicable to fruits than flowers; and except the last pentameter, the assertion it contains being rather too obvious a thought to finish with: not that I think an epitaph should be pointed like an epigram. But still there is a closeness of thought and expression necessary in the conclusion of all these little things, that they may leave an agreeable flavour upon the palate. Whatever is short, should be nervous, masculine, and compact. Little men are so; and little poems should be so; because, where the work is short, the author has no right to the plea of weariness; and laziness is never admitted as an available excuse in any thing. Now you know my opinion, you will very likely improve upon my improvement, and alter my alterations for the better. To touch and retouch is, though some writers boast of negligence, and others would be ashamed to show their foul copies, the secret of almost all good writing, especially in verse. I am never weary of it myself; and if you would take as much pains as I do, you would have no need to ask for my corrections.

Hic sepultus est
Inter suorum lacrymas
GULIELMUS NORTHCOT,
GULIELMI *et* MARIÆ *filius*
Unicus, unicè dilectus,
Qui floris ritu succisus est semihiantis,
Aprilis die septimo,
1780, *Æt.* 10.

Care, vale! Sed non æternùm, care, valeto!
Namque iterùm tecum, sim modò dignus ero:
Tum nihil amplexus poterit divellere nostros,
Nec tu marcesces, nec lacrymabor ego.

Having an English translation of it by me, I send it, though it may be of no use.

Farewell! "but not for ever," Hope replies,
"Trace but his steps, and meet him in the skies!"
There nothing shall renew our parting pain,
Thou shalt not wither, nor I weep again!

The stanzas that I sent you are maiden ones, having never been seen by any eye but your mother's and your own.

If you send me franks, I shall write longer letters—*Valete, sicut et nos valemus! Amate, sicut et nos amamus.*

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MON AMI, July 8, 1780.

IF you ever take the tip of the Chancellor's ear between your finger and thumb, you can hardly improve the opportunity to better purpose, than if you should whisper into it the voice of compassion and lenity to the lace-makers. I am an eye-witness of their poverty, and do know that hundreds in this little town are upon the point of starving, and that the most unremitting industry is but barely sufficient to keep them from it. I know that the bill by which they would have been so fatally affected is thrown out: but Lord Stormont threatens them with another; and if another like it should pass, they are undone. We lately sent a petition from hence to Lord Dartmouth; I signed it, and am sure the contents are true. The purport of it was to inform him that there are very near one thousand two hundred lace-makers in this beggarly town, the most of whom had reason enough, while the bill was in agitation, to look upon every loaf they bought as the last they should ever be able to earn. I can never think it good policy to incur the certain inconvenience of ruining thirty thousand, in order to prevent a

remote and possible damage though to a much greater number. The measure is like a scythe, and the poor lace-makers are the sickly crop that trembles before the edge of it. The prospect of peace with America is like the streak of dawn in their horizon; but this bill is like a black cloud behind it, that threatens their hope of a comfortable day with utter extinction.

I did not perceive till this moment, that I had tacked two similes together; a practice which, though warranted by the example of Homer, and allowable in an epic poem, is rather luxuriant and licentious in a letter: lest I should add another, I conclude. W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MON AMI, July 8, 1780.

By this time, I suppose, you have ventured to take your fingers out of your ears, being delivered from the deafening shouts of the most zealous mob that ever strained their lungs in the cause of religion. I congratulate you upon a gentle relapse into the customary sounds of a great city, which, though we rustics abhor them, as noisy and dissonant, are a musical and sweet murmur, compared with what you have lately heard. The tinkling of a kennel may be distinguished now, where the roaring of a cascade would have been sunk and lost. I never suspected, till the newspapers informed me of it, a few days since, that the barbarous uproar had reached Great Queen Street. I hope Mrs. Hill was in the country, and shall rejoice to hear that, as I am sure you did not take up the protestant cudgels upon this hair-brained occasion, so you have not been pulled in pieces as a papist. Wm. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

July 11, 1780.

I have no oracular responses to make you upon the subject of gardening, while I know that you have both Miller and Mawe in your possession; to them I refer you, but especially to the latter, because it will be little or no trouble to consult him. I have heard that if the first crop of roses are cut off as fast as the buds appear, a second will be produced in autumn. I do not know it to be true; but the fact is easily ascertained, and I recommend it to Miss Shuttleworth to make the experiment with her scissors.

I account myself sufficiently commended for my Latin ex-

ercise, by the number of translations it has undergone. That which you distinguished in the margin by the word "better," was the production of a friend; and, except that for a modest reason he omitted the third couplet, I think it is a good one. To finish the group, I have translated it myself; and though I would not wish you to give it to the world, for more reasons than one, especially lest some French hero should call me to an account for it,—I add it on the other side. An author ought to be the best judge of his own meaning; and, whether I have succeeded or not, I cannot but wish, that where a translator is wanted, the writer was always to be his own.

False, cruel, disappointed, stung to the heart,
France quits the warrior's for the assassin's part;
To dirty hands, a dirty bribe conveys,
Bids the low street and lofty palace blaze.
Her sons too weak to vanquish us alone,
She hires the worst and basest of our own.
Kneel, France! a suppliant conquers us with ease;
We always spare a coward on his knees.

I have often wondered that Dryden's illustrious epigram on Milton (in my mind the second best that ever was made) has never been translated into Latin, for the admiration of the learned in other countries. I have at last presumed to venture upon the task myself. The great closeness of the original, which is equal in that respect to the most compact Latin I ever saw, made it extremely difficult.

Tres, tria, sed longe distantia sæcula, Vates
Ostentant, tribus e gentibus, eximios.
Græcia sublimem, cum majestate disertum
Roma tulit, felix Anglia utrisque parem.
Partubus ex binis Natura exhausta, coacta est
Tertius ut fieret, consociare Duos.

I have not one bright thought upon the chancellor's recovery; nor can I strike off so much as one sparkling atom from that brilliant subject. It is not when I will, nor upon what I will, but as a thought happens to occur to me; and then I versify, whether I will or not. I never write but for my amusement; and what I write is sure to answer that end, if it answers no other. If, besides this purpose, the more desirable one of entertaining you be effected, I then receive double fruit of my labour, and consider this produce of it as a second crop, the more valuable, because less expected. But when I have once

remitted a composition to you, I have done with it. It is prett certain that I shall never read it or think of it again. Fro that moment I have constituted you sole judge of its accom plishments, if it has any, and of its defects, which it is sur to have.

For this reason I decline answering the question with whic you concluded your last, and cannot persuade myself to ente into a critical examen of the two pieces upon Lord Mansfield' loss, either with respect to their intrinsic or comparative merit and indeed after having rather discouraged that use of the which you had designed, there is no occasion for it.

I understand, though I have not seen it, that the author o Thelyphthora establishes many of his premises upon his ow peculiar interpretation of the original Hebrew. I am therefor absolutely incompetent to decide the question whether he ha Scripture on his side or not, and have no more curiosity to se his book than I should have if it were written in that language. If I had a wife of whom I was weary, and wished to be indulged with the liberty of taking another, I would certainly read it, and study it too. I should be encouraged in this undertaking, by a hope that passion, prejudice, and appetite combining together with the author's ingenuity to impose upon me, might succeed, and release me from the rusty and old fashioned bonds of fidelity, friendship, and love. But I have no interest in the question, at least no other interest than that of every man who wishes well to his country, and would be sorry to see the honest and faithful English husband converted into a Turkish stallion, and the amiable character of the English wife, the most amiable in the world, degraded into the sordid and base condition of a brood mare. W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 12, 1780.

SUCH nights as I frequently spend, are but a miserable prelude to the succeeding day, and indispose me, above all things, to the business of writing. Yet with a pen in my hand, if I am able to write at all, I find myself gradually relieved; and as I am glad of any employment that may serve to engage my attention, so especially I am pleased with an opportunity of conversing with you, though it be but upon paper. This occupation above all others assists me in that self-deception to which

I am indebted for all the little comfort I enjoy; things seem to be as they were, and I almost forget that they never can be so again.

We are both obliged to you for a sight of Mr. ——'s letter. The friendly and obliging manner of it will much enhance the difficulty of answering it. I think I can see plainly that though he does not hope for your applause, he would gladly escape your censure. He seems to approach you smoothly and softly, and to take you gently by the hand, as if he bespoke your lenity, and entreated you at least to spare him. You have such skill in the management of your pen, that I doubt not you will be able to send him a balmy reproof that shall give him no reason to complain of a broken head.—How delusive is the wildest speculation when pursued with eagerness, and nourished with such arguments as the perverted ingenuity of such a mind as his can easily furnish!—Judgment falls asleep upon the bench, while Imagination, like a smug, pert counseller, stands chattering at the bar, and with a deal of fine-spun, enchanting sophistry, carries all before him.

If I had strength of mind, I have not strength of body for the task which, you say, some would impose upon me. I cannot bear much thinking. The meshes of that fine network, the brain, are composed of such mere spinners' threads in me, that when a long thought finds its way into them, it buzzes, and twangs, and bustles about at such a rate as seems to threaten the whole contexture.—No.—I must needs refer it again to you.

My enigma will probably find you out, and you will find out my enigma at some future time. I am not in a humour to transcribe it now. Indeed I wonder that a sportive thought should ever knock at the door of my intellects, and still more that it should gain admittance. It is as if harlequin should intrude himself into the gloomy chamber where a corpse is deposited in state. His antic gesticulations would be unseasonable at any rate, but more especially so if they should distort the features of the mournful attendants into laughter. But the mind long wearied with the sameness of a dull, dreary prospect, will gladly fix its eyes on any thing that may make a little variety in its contemplations, though it were but a kitten playing with her tail.

You would believe, though I did not say it at the end of

every letter, that we remember you and Mrs. Newton with the same affection as ever; but I would not therefore excuse myself from writing what it gives you pleasure to read. I have often wished indeed, when writing to an ordinary correspondent, for the revival of the Roman custom—*salutem* at top, and *vale* at bottom. But as the French have taught all Europe to enter a room and to leave it with a most ceremonious bow, so they have taught us to begin and conclude our letters in the same manner. However I can say to you,

Sans ceremonie,

Adieu, *mon ami!* W^M. COWPER.

TO MRS. COWPER, PARK STREET, GROSVENOR SQUARE.

MY DEAR COUSIN, July 20, 1780.

MR. NEWTON having desired me to be of the party, I am come to meet him. You see me sixteen years older, at the least, than when I saw you last; but the effects of time seem to have taken place rather on the outside of my head than within it. What was brown is become gray, but what was foolish remains foolish still. Green fruit must rot before it ripens, if the season is such as to afford it nothing but cold winds and dark clouds, that interrupt every ray of sunshine. My days steal away silently, and march on (as poor mad King Lear would have made his soldiers march) as if they were shod with felt; not so silently but that I hear them; yet were it not that I am always listening to their flight, having no infirmity that I had not when I was much younger, I should deceive myself with an imagination that I am still young.

I am fond of writing as an amusement but do not always find it one. Being rather scantily furnished with subjects that are good for any thing, and corresponding only with those who have no relish for such as are good for nothing, I often find myself reduced to the necessity, the disagreeable necessity of writing about myself. This does not mend the matter much; for though in a description of my own condition, I discover abundant materials to employ my pen upon, yet as the task is not very agreeable to *me*, so I am sufficiently aware that it is likely to prove irksome to others. A painter who should confine himself in the exercise of his art to the drawing of his own picture, must be a wonderful coxcomb, if he did not soon grow sick of his occupation; and be peculiarly fortunate, if he *did* not make others as sick as himself.

Remote as your dwelling is from the late scene of riot and confusion, I hope that though you could not but hear the report, you heard no more, and that the roarings of the mad multitude did not reach you. That was a day of terror to the innocent, and the present is a day of still greater terror to the guilty. The law was for a few moments like an arrow in the quiver, seemed to be of no use, and did no execution; now it is an arrow upon the string, and many, who despised it lately, are trembling as they stand before the point of it.

I have talked more already than I have formerly done in three visits:—you remember my taciturnity never to be forgotten by those who knew me. Not to depart entirely from what might be, for aught I know, the most shining part of my character, I here shut my mouth, make my bow, and return to Olney. W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 27, 1780.

As two men sit silent, after having exhausted all their topics of conversation, one says—"It is very fine weather,"—and the other says—"Yes;"—one blows his nose, and the other rubs his eyebrows; (by the way, this is very much in Homer's manner), such seems to be the case between you and me. After a silence of some days, I wrote you a long something, that (I suppose) was nothing to the purpose, because it has not afforded you materials for an answer. Nevertheless, as it often happens in the case above-stated, one of the distressed parties, being deeply sensible of the awkwardness of a dumb duet, breaks silence again, and resolves to speak, though he has nothing to say. So it fares with me; I am with you again in the form of an epistle, though considering my present emptiness, I have reason to fear that your only joy upon the occasion will be, that it is conveyed to you in a frank.

When I began, I expected no interruption. But if I had expected interruptions without end, I should have been less disappointed. First came the barber; who, after having embellished the outside of my head, has left the inside just as unfurnished as he found it. Then came Olney bridge,—not into the house, but into the conversation. The cause relating to it was tried on Tuesday at Buckingham. The judge directed the jury to find a verdict favourable to Olney. The jury consisted

of one knave and eleven fools. The last-mentioned followed the afore-mentioned, as sheep follow a bell-wether, and decided in direct opposition to the said judge. Then a flaw was discovered in the indictment. The indictment was quashed, and an order made for a new trial. The new trial will be in the King's Bench, where said knave and said fools will have nothing to do with it. So the men of Olney fling up their caps, and assure themselves of a complete victory. A victory will save me and your mother many shillings, perhaps some pounds, which except that it has afforded me a subject to write upon, was the only reason why I have said so much about it. I know you take an interest in all that concerns us, and will consequently rejoice with us in the prospect of an event in which we are concerned so nearly.

Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO THE REV JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR SIR, July 30, 1780.

You may think perhaps that I deal more liberally with Mr. Unwin, in the way of poetical export than I do with you, and I believe you have reason: the truth is this;—If I walked the streets with a fiddle under my arm, I should never think of performing before the window of a Privy Counsellor, or a Chief Justice, but should rather make free with ears more likely to be open to such amusement. The trifles I produce in this way are indeed such trifles, that I cannot think them seasonable presents for you. Mr. Unwin himself would not be offended if I was to tell him that there is this difference between him and Mr. Newton; that the latter is already an apostle, while he himself is only undergoing the business of an incubation, with a hope that he may be hatched in time. When my Muse comes forth arrayed in sables, at least in a robe of graver cast, I make no scruple to direct her to my friend at Hoxton. This has been one reason why I have so long delayed the riddle. But lest I should seem to set a value upon it, that I do not, by making it an object of still further inquiry, here it comes.

I am just two and two, I am warm, I am cold,
And the parent of numbers that cannot be told;
I am lawful, unlawful—a duty, a fault;
I am often sold dear, good for nothing when bought,
An extraordinary boon, and a matter of course,
And yielded with pleasure—when taken by force.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, August 6, 1780.

ɔu like to hear from me: this is a very good reason why I ıould write.—But I have nothing to say: this seems equally a ıod reason why I should not. Yet if you had alighted from ɔur horse at our door this morning, and at this present writing, ıing five o'clock in the afternoon, had found occasion to say me—"Mr. Cowper, you have not spoke since I came in; ıve you resolved never to speak again?" it would be but a ɔor reply, if in answer to the summons I should plead inability ı my best and only excuse. And this by the way suggests to e a seasonable piece of instruction, and reminds me of what am very apt to forget, when I have any epistolary business ı hand, that a letter may be written upon any thing or nothing ıst as that any thing or nothing happens to occur. A man that ıs a journey before him twenty miles in length, which he is ı perform on foot, will not hesitate and doubt whether he ıall set out or not, because he does not readily conceive how ɔ shall ever reach the end of it: for he knows, that by the mple operation of moving one foot forward first, and then ıe other, he shall be sure to accomplish it. So it is in the ɔesent case, and so it is in every similar case. A letter is ritten as a conversation is maintained, or a journey perrmed; not by preconcerted or premeditated means, a new ıntrivance, or an invention never heard of before,—but merely ɔ maintaining a progress, and resolving as a postilion does, ıving once set out, never to stop till we reach the appointed ıd. If a man may talk without thinking, why may he not rite upon the same terms? A grave gentleman of the last ntury, a tie-wig, square-toe, Steinkirk figure, would say—My good sir, a man has no right to do either." But it is to ɔ hoped that the present century has nothing to do with the ouldy opinions of the last; and so good Sir Launcelot, or r[1] Paul, or whatever be your name, step into your picture ame again, and look as if you thought for another century, ıd leave us moderns in the mean time to think when we can, ıd to write whether we can or not, else we might as well be ɔad as you are.

When we look back upon our forefathers, we seem to look

[1] A whimsical blunder in one edition of Cowper's works has converted ıis into *St. Paul.*

back upon the people of another nation, almost upon creatures of another species. Their vast rambling mansions, spacious halls, and painted casements, the gothic porch smothered with honeysuckles, their little gardens and high walls, their box-edgings, balls of holly, and yew-tree statues, are become so entirely unfashionable now, that we can hardly believe it possible, that a people who resembled us so little in their taste, should resemble us in any thing else. But in every thing else, I suppose, they were our counterparts exactly; and time, that has sewed up the slashed sleeve, and reduced the large trunk hose to a neat pair of silk stockings, has left human nature just where it found it. The inside of the man at least has undergone no change. His passions, appetites, and aims, are just what they ever were. They wear perhaps a handsomer disguise than they did in days of yore; for philosophy and literature will have their effect upon the exterior; but in every other respect a modern is only an ancient in a different dress. W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR, Aug. 10, 1780.

I GREET you at your castle of Buen Retiro, and wish you could enjoy the unmixt pleasures of the country there. But it seems you are obliged to dash the cup with a portion of those bitters you are always swallowing in town. Well—you are honourably and usefully employed, and ten times more beneficially to society, than if you were piping to a few sheep under a spreading beech, or listening to a tinkling rill. Besides, by the effect of long custom and habitual practice, you are not only enabled to endure your occupation, but even find it agreeable. I remember the time when it would not have suited you so well, to have devoted so large a part of your vacation to the objects of your profession; and you, I dare say, have not forgot what a seasonable relaxation you found, when, lying at full stretch upon the ruins of an old wall, by the sea-side, you amused yourself with Tasso's Jerusalem, and the Pastor Fido. I recollect that we both pitied Mr. De Grey, when we called at his cottage at Taplow, and found, not the master indeed, but his desk, with his white-leaved folio upon it, which bespoke him as much a man of business in his retirement as in Westminster Hall. But by these steps he ascended the Bench. Now he may read what he pleases, and ride where he will, if

the gout will give him leave. And you who have no gout, and probably never will, when your hour of dismission comes, will, for that reason, if for no other, be a happier man than he.

I am, my dear friend,
affectionately yours, Wm. COWPER.

P. S. Mr. —— has not thought proper to favour me with his book, and having no interest in the subject, I have not thought proper to purchase it. Indeed I have no curiosity to read what I am sure must be erroneous before I read it. Truth is worth every thing that can be given for it; but a mere display of ingenuity, calculated only to mislead, is worth nothing.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

August 21, 1780.

The following occurrence ought not to be passed over in silence, in a place where so few notable ones are to be met with. Last Wednesday night, while we were at supper, between the hours of eight and nine, I heard an unusual noise in the back parlour, as if one of the hares was entangled, and endeavouring to disengage herself. I was just going to rise from table, when it ceased. In about five minutes, a voice on the outside of the parlour door inquired if one of my hares had got away. I immediately rushed into the next room, and found that my poor favourite Puss had made her escape. She had gnawed in sunder the strings of a lattice work, with which I thought I had sufficiently secured the window, and which I preferred to any other sort of blind, because it admitted plenty of air. From thence I hastened to the kitchen, where I saw the redoubtable Thomas Freeman, who told me, that having seen her, just after she had dropped into the street, he attempted to cover her with his hat, but she screamed out, and leaped directly over his head. I then desired him to pursue as fast as possible, and added Richard Coleman to the chase, as being nimbler, and carrying less weight than Thomas; not expecting to see her again, but desirous to learn, if possible, what became of her. In something less than an hour, Richard returned, almost breathless, with the following account. That soon after he began to run, he left Tom behind him, and came in sight of a most numerous hunt of men, women, children, and dogs; that he did his best to keep back the dogs, and presently outstripped the crowd, so that the race was at last disputed

between himself and Puss;—she ran right through the town, and down the lane that leads to Dropshort; a little before she came to the house, he got the start and turned her; she pushed for the town again, and soon after she entered it, sought shelter in Mr. Wagstaff's tanyard, adjoining to old Mr. Drake's. Sturges's harvest men were at supper, and saw her from the opposite side of the way. There she encountered the tanpits full of water; and while she was struggling out of one pit, and plunging into another, and almost drowned, one of the men drew her out by the ears, and secured her. She was then well washed in a bucket to get the lime out of her coat, and brought home in a sack at ten o'clock.

This frolic cost us four shillings, but you may believe we did not grudge a farthing of it. The poor creature received only a little hurt in one of her claws, and in one of her ears, and is now almost as well as ever.

I do not call this an answer to your letter, but such as it is I send it, presuming upon that interest which I know you take in my minutest concerns, which I cannot express better than in the words of Terence a little varied—*Nihil mei a te alienum putas.* Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO MRS. COWPER, PARK STREET, GROSVENOR SQUARE.

MY DEAR COUSIN, August 31, 1780.

I AM obliged to you for your long letter, which did not seem so; and for your short one, which was more than I had any reason to expect. Short as it was, it conveyed to me two interesting articles of intelligence: An account of your recovering from a fever, and of Lady Cowper's death. The latter was, I suppose, to be expected, for by what remembrance I have of her ladyship, who was never much acquainted with her, she had reached those years that are always found upon the borders of another world. As for you, your time of life is comparatively of a youthful date. You may think of death as much as you please, (you cannot think of it too much), but I hope you will live to think of it many years.

It costs me not much difficulty to suppose that my friends who were already grown old when I saw them last, are old still; but it costs me a good deal sometimes to think of those who were at that time young, as being older than they were. Not having been an eye-witness of the change that time has made

n them, and my former idea of them not being corrected by observation, it remains the same; my memory presents me with this image unimpaired, and while it retains the resemblance of what they were, forgets that by this time the picture may have lost much of its likeness, through the alteration that succeeding years have made in the original. I know not what impressions Time may have made upon your person, for while his claws, (as our grannams called them) strike deep furrows in some faces, he seems to sheath them with much tenderness, as if fearful of doing injury to others. But though an enemy to the person, he is a friend to the mind, and you have found him so. Though even in this respect his treatment of us depends upon what he meets with at our hands; if we use him well, and listen to his admonitions, he is a friend indeed, but otherwise the worst of enemies, who takes from us daily something that we valued, and gives us nothing better in its stead. It is well with them who, like you, can stand a tiptoe on the mountain top of human life, look down with pleasure upon the valley they have passed, and sometimes stretch their wings in joyful hope of a happy flight into eternity. Yet a little while, and your hope will be accomplished.

When you can favour me with a little account of your own family, without inconvenience, I shall be glad to receive it; for though separated from my kindred by little more than half a century of miles, I know as little of their concerns as if oceans and continents were interposed between us.

Yours, my dear cousin, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Sept. 3, 1780.

I AM glad you are so provident, and that, while you are yet young, you have furnished yourself with the means of comfort in old age. Your crutch and your pipe may be of use to you, (and may they be so,) should your years be extended to an antediluvian date; and for your present accommodation, you seem to want nothing but a clerk called Snuffle, and a sexton of the name of Skeleton, to make your ministerial equipage complete.

I think I have read as much of the first volume of the Biographia as I shall ever read. I find it very amusing; more so perhaps than it would have been had they sifted their cha-

racters with more exactness, and admitted none but those who had in some way or other entitled themselves to immortality, by deserving well of the public. Such a compilation would perhaps have been more judicious, though I confess it would have afforded less variety. The priests and the monks of earlier, and the doctors of later days, who have signalized themselves by nothing but a controversial pamphlet, long since thrown by, and never to be perused again, might have been forgotten, without injury or loss to the national character for learning or genius. This observation suggested to me the following lines, which may serve to illustrate my meaning, and at the same time to give my criticism a sprightlier air.

Oh fond attempt, to give a deathless lot
To names ignoble, born to be forgot!
In vain, recorded in historic page,
They court the notice of a future age;
Those twinkling, tiny lustres of the land
Drop one by one, from Fame's neglecting hand;
Lethean gulfs receive them as they fall,
And dark oblivion soon absorbs them all.
So when a child (as playful children use)
Has burnt to cinder a stale last-year's news,
The flame extinct, he views the roving fire,
There goes my lady, and there goes the squire,
There goes the parson——O illustrious spark!
And there——scarce less illustrious——goes the clerk!

Virgil admits none but worthies into the Elysian Fields; I cannot recollect the lines in which he describes them all, but these in particular I well remember—

Quique sui memores alios fecere merendo,
Inventas aut qui vitam excoluêre per artes.

A chaste and scrupulous conduct like his would well become the writer of national biography. But enough of this.

Our respects attend Miss Shuttleworth, with many thanks for her intended present. Some purses derive all their value from their contents, but these will have an intrinsic value of their own: and though mine should be often empty, which is not an improbable supposition, I shall still esteem it highly on its own account.

If you could meet with a second-hand Virgil, ditto Homer, both Iliad and Odyssey, together with a Clavis, for I have no Lexicon, and all tolerably cheap, I shall be obliged to you if you will make the purchase. Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Sept. 7, 1780.

s many gentlemen as there are in the world, who have ıildren, and heads capable of reflecting on the important sub- ·ct of their education, so many opinions there are about it; ıany of them just and sensible, though almost all differing ·om each other. With respect to the education of boys, I ıink they are generally made to draw in Latin and Greek :ammels too soon. It is pleasing, no doubt, to a parent, to see is child already in some sort a proficient in those languages, t an age when most others are entirely ignorant of them; ut hence it often happens, that a boy, who would construe a ıble in Æsop at six or seven years of age, having exhausted ıis little stock of attention and diligence in making that ıotable acquisition, grows weary of his task, conceives a dis- ike for study, and perhaps makes but a very indifferent progress fterwards. The mind and the body have in this respect a triking resemblance of each other. In childhood they are both ıimble, but not strong; they can skip and frisk about with vonderful agility, but hard labour spoils them both. In ma- urer years they become less active, but more vigorous, more :apable of a fixed application, and can make themselves sport vith that which a little earlier would have affected them with ntolerable fatigue. I should recommend it to you therefore, —(but after all you must judge for yourself,) to allot the two ıext years of little John's scholarship to writing and arith- ıetic, together with which, for variety's sake, and because it ı capable of being formed into an amusement, I would mingle ;eography, a science (which, if not attended to betimes, is eldom made an object of much consideration) essentially neces- ary to the accomplishment of a gentleman, yet (as I know by ad experience) imperfectly, if at all, inculcated in the schools. ord Spencer's son, when he was four years of age, knew the ituation of every kingdom, country, city, river, and remark- ble mountain in the world. For this attainment, which I sup- ose his father had never made, he was indebted to a play- hing; having been accustomed to amuse himself with those aaps which are cut into several compartments, so as to be hrown into a heap of confusion, that they may be put together gain with an exact coincidence of all their angles and bear- ıgs, so as to form a perfect whole.

If he begins Latin and Greek at eight, or even at nine years of age, it is surely soon enough. Seven years, the usual allowance for those acquisitions, are more than sufficient for the purpose, especially with his readiness in learning; for you would hardly wish to have him qualified for the university before fifteen, a period, in my mind, much too early for it, and when he could hardly be trusted there without the utmost danger to his morals. Upon the whole, you will perceive that in my judgment the difficulty, as well as the wisdom, consists more in bridling in, and keeping back, a boy of his parts, than in pushing him forward. If, therefore, at the end of the two next years, instead of putting a grammar into his hand, you should allow him to amuse himself with some agreeable writers upon the subject of natural philosophy for another year, I think it would answer well. There is a book called Cosmotheoria Puerilis, there are Derham's Physico-, and Astro-theology, together with several others, in the same manner, very intelligible even to a child, and full of useful instruction.

Plums and pears in my next. W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Sept. 17, 1780.

You desire my further thoughts on the subject of education. I send you such as had for the most part occurred to me when I wrote last, but could not be comprised in a single letter. They are indeed on a different branch of this interesting theme, but not less important than the former.

I think it your happiness, and wish you to think it so yourself, that you are in every respect qualified for the task of instructing your son, and preparing him for the university, without committing him to the care of a stranger. In my judgment, a domestic education deserves the preference to a public one on a hundred accounts, which I have neither time nor room to mention. I shall only touch upon two or three that I cannot but consider as having a right to your most earnest attention.

In a public school, or indeed in any school, his morals are sure to be but little attended to, and his religion not at all. If he can catch the love of virtue from the fine things that are spoken of it in the classics, and the love of holiness from a customary attendance upon such preaching as he is likely

to hear, it will be well; but I am sure you have had too many opportunities to observe the inefficacy of such means, to expect any such advantage from them. In the mean time, the more powerful influence of bad example, and perhaps bad company, will continually counterwork these only preservatives he can meet with, and may possibly send him home to you, at the end of five or six years, such as you will be sorry to see him. You escaped indeed the contagion yourself; but a few instances of happy exemption from a general malady are no sufficient warrant to conclude, that it is therefore not infectious, or may be encountered without danger.

You have seen too much of the world, and are a man of too much reflection, not to have observed that in proportion as the sons of a family approach to years of maturity, they lose a sense of obligation to their parents, and seem at last almost divested of that tender affection which the nearest of all relations seems to demand from them. I have often observed it myself, and have always thought I could sufficiently account for it, without laying all the blame upon the children. While they continue in their parents' house, they are every day obliged, and every day reminded how much it is their interest, as well as a duty, to be obliging and affectionate in return. But at eight or nine years of age the boy goes to school. From that moment he becomes a stranger in his father's house. The course of parental kindness is intercepted. The smiles of his mother, the tender admonitions, and the solicitous care of both his parents, are no longer before his eyes: year after year he feels himself more and more detached from them, till at last he is so effectually weaned from the connexion, as to find himself happier any where than in their company.

I should have been glad of a frank for this letter, for I have said but little of what I could say upon the subjeet, and perhaps I may not be able to catch it by the end again. If I can, I shall add to it hereafter.

The Breda is the best late apricot, and the Empress or *Imperatrice* plum is that which your mother principally recommends. It turns to a fine dried sweetmeat upon the tree, but must not be gathered sooner. Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 5, 1780.

Now for the sequel. You have anticipated one of my argu-

ments in favour of a private education, therefore I need say but little about it. The folly of supposing that the mother-tongue, in some respects the most difficult of all tongues, may be acquired without a teacher, is predominant in all the public schools that I have ever heard of. To pronounce it well, to speak and to write it with fluency and elegance, are no easy attainments; not one in fifty of those who pass through Westminster and Eton, arrive at any remarkable proficiency in these accomplishments; and they that do are more indebted to their own study and application for it, than to any instruction received there. In general, there is nothing so pedantic as the style of a schoolboy, if he aims at any style at all; and if he does not, he is of course inelegant, and perhaps ungrammatical. A defect, no doubt, in great measure owing to the want of cultivation; for the same lad that is often commended for his Latin, frequently would deserve to be whipped for his English, if the fault were not more his master's than his own. I know not where this evil is so likely to be prevented as at home,—supposing always, nevertheless (which is the case in your instance), that the boy's parents, and their acquaintance, are persons of elegance and taste themselves. For to converse with those who converse with propriety, and to be directed to such authors as have refined and improved the language by their productions, are advantages which he cannot elsewhere enjoy in an equal degree. And though it requires some time to regulate the taste, and fix the judgement, and these effects must be gradually wrought even upon the best understanding, yet I suppose much less time will be necessary for the purpose than could at first be imagined, because the opportunities of improvement are continual.

I promised to say little on this topic, and I have said so much, that if I had not a frank I must burn my letter and begin again.

A public education is often recommended as the most effectual remedy for that bashful and awkward constraint, so epidemical among the youth of our country. But I verily believe that instead of being a cure, it is often the cause of it. For seven or eight years of his life, the boy has hardly seen or conversed with a man, or a woman, except the maids at his boarding house. A gentleman or a lady are consequently such *novelties* to him, that he is perfectly at a loss to know what sort

f behaviour he should preserve before them. He plays with his uttons, or the strings of his hat, he blows his nose, and hangs own his head, is conscious of his own deficiency to a degree hat makes him quite unhappy, and trembles lest any one hould speak to him, because that would quite overwhelm im. Is not all this miserable shyness evidently the effect of is education? To me it appears to be so. If he saw good ompany every day, he would never be terrified at the sight of , and a room full of ladies and gentlemen would alarm him o more than the chairs they sit on. Such is the effect of ustom.

I need add nothing further on this subject, because I believe ttle John is as likely to be exempted from this weakness as ost young gentlemen we shall meet with. He seems to have is father's spirit in this respect, in whom I could never disern the least trace of bashfulness, though I have often heard im complain of it. Under your management, and the influence f your example, I think he can hardly fail to escape it. If he does, he escapes that which makes many a man uncomfortable for life; and has ruined not a few, by forcing them into mean and dishonourable company where only they could be free and cheerful.

Connexions formed at school are said to be lasting, and often beneficial. There are two or three stories of this kind upon record, which would not be so constantly cited as they are, whenever this subject happens to be mentioned, if the chronicle that preserves their remembrance had many besides to boast of. For my own part, I found such friendships, though warm enough in their commencement, surprisingly liable to extinction; and of seven or eight, whom I had selected for intimates out of about three hundred, in ten years time not one was left me. The truth is, that there may be, and often is an attachment of one boy to another, that looks very like a friendship; and while they are in circumstances that enable them mutually to oblige and to assist each other promises well, and bids fair to be lasting. But they are no sooner separated from each other, by entering into the world at large, than other connexions, and new employments, in which they no longer share together, efface the remembrance of what passed in earlier days, and they become strangers to each other for ever. Add to this, that the *man* frequently differs so much from the

boy,—his principles, manners, temper, and conduct, undergo so great an alteration,—that we no longer recognise in him our old playfellow, but find him utterly unworthy and unfit for the place he once held in our affections.

To close this article, as I did the last, by applying myself immediately to the present concern,—little John is happily placed above all occasion for dependance upon such precarious hopes, and need not be sent to school in quest of some great man in embryo, who may possibly make his fortune.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO MRS. NEWTON.

DEAR MADAM, Oct. 5, 1780.

WHEN a lady speaks, it is not civil to make her wait a week for an answer.—I received your letter within this hour, and, foreseeing that the garden will engross much of my time for some days to come, have seized the present opportunity to acknowledge it. I congratulate you on Mr. Newton's safe arrival at Ramsgate, making no doubt but that he reached the place without difficulty or danger, the road thither from Canterbury being so good as to afford room for neither. He has now a view of the element, with which he was once so familiar, but which I think he has not seen for many years. The sight of his old acquaintance will revive in his mind a pleasing recollection of past deliverances, and when he looks at him from the beach, he may say—"You have formerly given me trouble enough, but I have cast anchor now where your billows can never reach me."—It is happy for him that he can say so.

Mrs. Unwin returns you many thanks for your anxiety on her account. Her health is considerably mended upon the whole, so as to afford us a hope that it will be established.

Our love attends you.

Yours, dear madam, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

Nov. 9, 1780.

I WROTE the following last summer. The tragical occasion of it really happened at the next house to ours. I am glad when I can find a subject to work upon; a lapidary I suppose accounts it a laborious part of his business to rub away the roughness of the stone; but it is my amusement, and if after

all the polishing I can give it, it discovers some little lustre, I think myself well rewarded for my pains.

I shall charge you a half penny a-piece for every copy I send you, the short as well as the long. This is a sort of after-clap you little expected, but I cannot possibly afford them at a cheaper rate. If this method of raising money had occurred to me sooner, I should have made the bargain sooner; but am glad I have hit upon it at last. It will be a considerable encouragement to my muse, and act as a powerful stimulus to my industry. If the American war should last much longer, I may be obliged to raise my price; but this I shall not do without a real occasion for it:—it depends much upon Lord North's pretty conduct in the article of supplies. If he imposes an additional tax on anything that I deal in, the necessity of this measure, on my part, will be so apparent, that I dare say you will not dispute it.

Your mother desires me to add her love to mine, which waits on you all as usual. She is much pleased with your desire to hear from her, but having such an industrious secretary in me, she thought it the less necessary. She will use her own hand, however, when her nerves, which are seldom well strung, and which this turbulent weather particularly discomposes, will give her leave. W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 10, 1780

I AM sorry that the bookseller shuffles off the trouble of package upon anybody that belongs to you. I think I could cast him upon this point, in an action upon the case, grounded upon the terms of his own undertaking. He engages to serve country customers. Ergo, as it would be unreasonable to expect that when a country gentleman wants a book, he should order his chaise, and bid the man drive to Exeter Change, and as it is not probable that the book would find the way to him, of itself, though it were the wisest that ever was written, I should suppose the law would compel him. For I recollect it is a maxim of good authority in the courts, that there is no right without a remedy. And if another, or a third person, should not be suffered to interpose between my right and the remedy the law gives me, where the right is [illegible] much less, I say

[illegible] Verses on a Goldfinch [illegible] to death in a Sage

prehend, shall the man himself, who of his own mere motion gives me that right, be suffered to do it.

I never made so long an argument upon a law case before. I ask your pardon for doing it now. You have but little need of such entertainment.

Yours affectionately, W^M^. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Probably Nov. or Dec. 1780.

I THANK you much for your letter, which, without obliging me to travel to Wargrove at a time of year when journeying is not very agreeable, has introduced me in the most commodious manner to a perfect acquaintance with your neat little garden, your old cottage, and above all with your most prudent and sagacious landlady. As much as I admire her, I admire much more the philosophical temper with which you seem to treat her: for I know few characters more provoking, to me, at least, than the selfish, who are never honest; especially if while they determine to pick your pocket, they have not ingenuity enough to conceal their purpose. But you are perfectly in the right, and act just as I would endeavour to do on the same occasion. You sacrifice every thing to a retreat you admire; and, if the natural indolence of my disposition did not forsake me, so would I.

You might as well apologize for sending me forty pounds as for writing about yourself. Of the two ingredients I hardly know which made your letter the most agreeable—(observe, I do not say the most acceptable.) The draft indeed was welcome; but though it was so, yet it did not make me laugh. I laughed heartily at the account you gave of yourself and your landlady, Dame Saveall, whose picture you have drawn, though not with a flattering hand, yet I dare say with a strong resemblance. As to you, I have never seen so much of you, since I was in London, where you and I so often have made ourselves merry with each other's humour, yet never gave each other a moment's pain by doing so. We are both humourists, and it is well for your wife and my Mrs. Unwin, that they have alike found out the way to deal with us.

More thanks to Mrs. Hill for her intentions. She has the true enthusiasm of a gardener, and therefore I can pity her under her disappointment, having so large a share of that commodity myself.

I am informed that Lady C. has left me an annuity of twenty pounds. I mention it merely because, as you do not, I thought you might not have heard it.

Yours, my dear Sir, affectionately, W^M^. COWPER.

Dec. 10, 1780.

It is well for me that as my intelligencer with respect to Lady Cowper's legacy proved to be mistaken; the substantial part of his information is however authenticated and the money not lost, though it comes from a different mine.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Dec. 21, 1780.

I THANK you for your anecdote of Judge Carpenter. If it really happened, it is one of the best stories I ever heard; and if not, it has at least the merit of being *ben trovato*. We both very sincerely laughed at it, and think the whole Livery of London must have done the same; though I have known some persons whose faces, as if they had been cast in a mould, could never be provoked to the least alteration of a single feature; so that you might as well relate a good story to a barber's block.

Non equidem invideo, miror magis.

Your sentiments with respect to me are exactly Mrs. Unwin's. She, like you, is perfectly sure of my deliverance, and often tells me so. I make but one answer, and sometimes none at all. That answer gives *her* no pleasure, and would give *you* as little; therefore at this time I suppress it. It is better on every account that they who interest themselves so deeply in that event, should believe the certainty of it, than that they should not. It is a comfort to *them* at least, if it is none to me; and as I could not, if I would, so neither would I, if I could, deprive them of it.

I annex a long thought in verse for your perusal. It was produced about last midsummer, but I never could prevail with myself, till now, to transcribe it. You have bestowed some commendations on a certain poem now in the press, and they, I suppose, have at least animated me to the task. If human nature may be compared to a piece of tapestry, (and why not?) then human nature, as it subsists in me, though it is sadly faded on the right side, retains all its colour on the wrong. I am pleased with commendation, and though not passionately

desirous of indiscriminate praise, or what is generally called popularity, yet when a judicious friend claps me on the back, I own I find it an encouragement. At this season of the year, and in this gloomy uncomfortable climate, it is no easy matter for the owner of a mind like mine, to divert it from sad subjects, and fix it upon such as may administer to its amusement. Poetry, above all things, is useful to me in this respect. While I am held in pursuit of pretty images, or a pretty way of expressing them, I forget every thing that is irksome, and, like a boy that plays truant, determine to avail myself of the present opportunity to be amused, and to put by the disagreeable recollection that I must, after all, go home and be whipt again.

It will not be long, perhaps, before you will receive a poem called the *Progress of Error*. That will be succeeded by another, in due time, called *Truth*. Don't be alarmed. I ride Pegasus with a curb. He will never run away with me again. I have even convinced Mrs. Unwin that I can manage him, and make him stop when I please.

Yours, W^M^. COWPER.

TO THE REV. W. UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 24, 1780.

I AM sensibly mortified at finding myself obliged to disappoint you; but though I have had many thoughts upon the subjects you propose to my consideration, I have had none that have been favourable to the undertaking. I applaud your purpose, for the sake of the principle from which it springs, but I look upon the evils you mean to animadvert upon, as too obstinate and inveterate ever to be expelled by the means you mention. The very persons to whom you would address your remonstrance, are themselves sufficiently aware of their enormity; years ago, to my knowledge, they were frequently the topics of conversation at polite tables; they have been frequently mentioned in both houses of Parliament, and I suppose there is hardly a member of either who would not immediately assent to the necessity of a reform were it proposed to him in a reasonable way. But there it stops, and there it will for ever stop, till the majority are animated with a zeal, in which at present they are deplorably defective. A religious man is unfeignedly shocked when he reflects upon the prevalence of such crimes; a moral man must needs be so in a degree, and will affect to be much more so than he is. But how many do you suppose

e among our worthy representatives, that come under these descriptions? If all were such, yet to new model e of the country, which must be done, in order to en unavoidable perjury less frequent, were a task they ardly undertake, on account of the great difficulty that tend it. Government is too much interested in the tion of malt liquor to reduce the number of venders. usible pleas may be offered in defence of travelling on , especially by the trading part of the world, as the nch of Bishops would find it difficult to overrule. respect to the violation of oaths, till a certain name generally respected than it is at present, however such as yourself may be grieved at it, the legislature are ely to lay it to heart. I do not mean, nor would by is attempt to discourage you in so laudable an enter- ut such is the light in which it appears to me, that I el the least spark of courage, qualifying or prompting bark in it myself. An exhortation, therefore, written by hopeless desponding me,—would be flat, insipid, and ting, and disgrace the cause, instead of serving it. If at I have said, however, you still retain the same senti- *facte, esto virtute tua!* there is nobody better qualified urself, and may your success prove that I despaired hout a reason.

oor sister!—she has many good qualities, and upon asions gives proof of a good understanding; but as ple have no ear for music, so she has none for humour. she cannot laugh at our jokes, we can, however, at kes, and in this way she makes us ample amends for pointment. Mr. Powley is much like herself: if his looks the jest, he will never be able to find it. They her of them born to write epigrams or ballads, and I be less mortified at the coldness with which they en- y small sallies in the way of drollery, when I reflect Swift himself had had no other judges, he would ve found one admirer.

deed, as you observe, incumbent upon Mr. Madan to the reviewer, if he means to maintain his point. ss he means likewise to expose himself more in a second than he did even in his first, it is still more incumbent to be silent. I reckon myself a competent judge of

the argument, so far as the Greek criticisms are in question; and if I am, a refutation of what his antagonist has advanced against that part of his performance, is (I think) impossible. That impossibility is followed close at the heels by a conclusion not to be avoided. Syllogistically dressed, it stands thus: The Scripture is the only ground on which the doctrine of polygamy can be proved.

But it cannot be proved by Scripture.

Ergo—Not at all.

You desired me, some time since, to send you my twenty-seven answers to ditto number of queries drawn up by the Rev. Mr. Riland, of Birmingham. I would have done it, if the Review had not made it entirely unnecessary. The gentleman, for whose use in particular I designed them, declined sending them to the querist at my instance; so that, immediately almost after their production, they became waste paper, and I kept no copy of them myself. The questions discovered such marks of almost childish imbecility, that I could not possibly propose to myself the acquisition of any credit by the answers. But as some men, especially weak ones, are apt to suppose themselves irrefragable and invincible in disputation, I replied to them merely to guard the poor gentleman against the pernicious effects of so sad a blunder upon an occasion of such importance.

My respects attend the family, that is to say, my affectionate ones. I heartily wish Mrs. Unwin better spirits. Never be afraid of the multiplication of children; you do not make them yourself, and He that does, knows how to provide for them. Poor bare-breeched Billy, to whom your alms were yesterday so acceptable, has no desponding thoughts upon this subject, though he has now four, and considering his age, and the age of his wife, may possibly have fourteen.

Yours, my dear friend, WM. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 25, 1780.

WEARY with rather a long walk in the snow, I am not likely to write a very sprightly letter, or to produce any thing that may cheer this gloomy season, unless I have recourse to my pocket-book, where perhaps I may find something to transcribe, —something that was written before the sun had taken leave

of our hemisphere, and when I was less fatigued than I am at present.

Happy is the man who knows just so much of the law, as to make himself a little merry now and then with the solemnity of juridical proceedings. I have heard of common law judgments before now, indeed have been present at the delivery of some, that, according to my poor apprehension, while they paid the utmost respect to the letter of a statute, have departed widely from the spirit of it; and, being governed entirely by the point of law, have left equity, reason, and common sense, behind them at an infinite distance. You will judge whether the following report of a case, drawn up by by myself, be not a proof and illustration of this satirical assertion[1]. Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 1780.

POETICAL reports of law cases are not very common, yet it seems to me desirable that they should be so. Many advantages would accrue from such a measure. They would in the first place be more commodiously deposited in the memory, just as linen, grocery, or other such matters, when neatly packed, are known to occupy less room, and to lie more conveniently in any trunk, chest, or box, to which they may be committed. In the next place, being divested of that infinite circumlocution, and the endless embarrassment in which they are involved by it, they would become surprisingly intelligible, in comparison with their present obscurity. And lastly, they would by this means be rendered susceptible of musical embellishment, and instead of being quoted in the courts, with that dull monotony, which is so wearisome to by-standers, and frequently lulls even the judges themselves to sleep, might be rehearsed in recitative; which would have an admirable effect, in keeping the attention fixed and lively, and could not fail to disperse that heavy atmosphere of sadness and gravity, which hangs over the jurisprudence of our country. I remember, many years ago, being informed by a relation of mine, who in his youth had applied himself to the study of the law, that one of his fellow students, a gentleman of sprightly parts,

[1] The "Report of an adjudged Case, not to be found in any of the Books," concluded this letter.

and very respectable talents of the poetical kind, did actually engage in the prosecution of such a design; for reasons I suppose somewhat similar to, if not the same with those I have now suggested. He began with Coke's Institutes; a book so rugged in its style, that an attempt to polish it seemed an Herculean labour, and not less arduous and difficult, than it would be to give the smoothness of a rabbit's fur to the prickly back of a hedgehog. But he succeeded to admiration, as you will perceive by the following specimen, which is all that my said relation could recollect of the performance.

Tenant in fee
Simple, is he,
And need neither quake nor quiver,
Who hath his lands,
Free from all demands,
To him and his heirs for ever.

You have an ear for music, and a taste for verse, which saves me the trouble of pointing out with a critical nicety the advantages of such a version. I proceed therefore to what I at first intended, and to transcribe the record of an adjudged case thus managed, to which indeed what I have premised was intended merely as an introduction[1]. W. C.

TO THE REV. W. UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Jan. 14, 1781.

I SELDOM write what may properly be called an answer to a letter, unless to a letter that requires an answer; but on the present occasion, being conscious that I have not spirits to enable me to make excursions on the wings of invention, I purpose to confine myself pretty much to the subject of yours. Which prudent procedure will serve the double purpose of relieving me from the toil of pumping in vain, and of convincing you that you cannot do a worse thing than to deprive me of your letters, upon an apprehension that they can afford me neither profit nor amusement.

Impressions made upon the mind in our early days are seldom entirely effaced. This is an old observation, but I shall engraft a new one upon it. Though you have a perfect recollection of John Cross's pious and wise remark, I am sadly afraid that you have never made a practical use of it, which

[1] This letter concluded with the poetical law case of "Nose, plaintiff—*Eyes*, defendants," before referred to.

I the more wonder at, because his unexpected good fortune in the instance you allude to, amounts almost to a proof of the great utility of such a custom. How is it possible, were you but properly careful to keep that part uppermost at the time of rising, that you could be plagued as you are with such a variety of misadventures?—tithes unpaid, dilapidations without end, lawsuits revived, and your curate running away from you, for the sake of a pleasanter country. I dare say John Cross was exempted from all these disagreeable occurrences; he had not half your understanding, yet knew how to avoid them all by attending to the main chance in the article you hint at. He presented something more substantial than even a seven-fold shield to the arrows of ill fortune; and receiving them, if he received them at all, where they could not possibly reach his heart, went through the world insensible of the troubles with which it abounds. He clapped his hand upon you know what, and said to misfortune, Now, madam, I defy you. This you know as well as I, this therefore you should practise; and though you cannot, I suppose, boast of such a buttress as he was fenced with, yet, *pro modulo*, and according to your ability, you should make that use of it his example teaches, and the most of a little.

From Mr. Madan's renewed publication, I cannot but infer that he preserves the same conduct as before he published at all. Letters of admonition, dissuasion, and exhortation, he burned unread; and has treated, I suppose, the Review with the same obstinate indifference and contempt. I the rather think so, because I am firmly persuaded he could not reply to his answerer; though it is possible his case may resemble that of a certain disputant I have heard of, who said upon a like occasion, "I am confuted, but not convinced."

Impregnable, however, as he may be to the attacks of sound reason, backed with all the authority of sound learning, his advocates are not all, it seems, quite so stubborn as himself. Mr. Riland, of Birmingham, has at last forsaken the standard of polygamy, and betaken himself to the side of Christian decorum and decency again. Mr. Powley, we learn from good authority, has been instrumental in working this conversion, which does him the more honour, as he had by all accounts a very weak, though a very good man to deal with. Men that have no large share of reason themselves, are seldom sensible of the force of *it in the hands* of another.

I am informed that the reviewer is prepari an answer at large, and that the Bishop of London has likewise undertaken the task. If this be the case, *actum est de Thelyphthorâ.* I hear likewise that the king, having read a part of it, threw it down with indignation, and expressed his regret that there was no law by which such an author could be brought to the punishment he deserves. This is not unlikely, for, by all accounts, he is a moral man, and consequently a chaste husband; that he should view therefore such a proposal with abhorrence is natural enough.

Your mother returns her thanks to Mrs. Unwin for her letter. Our love attends you both, with Miss Shuttleworth and her little ones. The two guineas may be sent with the salmon, for which we thank you *par avance.*

If the lines of your letter could be pushed together they would not fill three sides; and if mine could be moved to the distance at which yours stand from each other, they would fill four. This, however, is not my reason for concluding, but because I am weary, therefore I add only that I am

Yours as ever, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR SIR, Jan. 21, 1781.

I AM glad that the *Progress of Error* did not Err in its Progress, as I feared it had; and that it has reached you safe; and still more pleased that it has met with your approbation; for if it had not, I should have wished it had miscarried, and have been sorry that the bearer's memory had served him so well upon the occasion. I knew him to be that sort of genius, which, being much busy in making excursions of the imaginary kind, is not always present to its own immediate concerns, much less to those of others; and having reposed the trust in him, began to regret that I had done so, when it was too late. But I did it to save a frank, and as the affair has turned out, that end was very well answered. This is committed to the hands of a less volatile person, and therefore more to be depended on.

As to the poem called *Truth,* which is already longer than its elder brother, and is yet to be lengthened by the addition of perhaps twenty lines, perhaps more; I shrink from the thought of transcribing it at present. But as there is no need to be in any hurry about it, I hope that in some rainy season,

which the next month will probably bring with it, when perhaps I may be glad of employment, the undertaking will appear less formidable.

You need not withhold from us any intelligence relating to yourselves, upon an apprehension that Mr. Raban has been beforehand with you upon those subjects, for he came down as costive as if you had fed him upon nothing but quinces, and unless we engineered him with question after question, we could get nothing out of him. I have known such travellers in my time, and Mrs. Newton is no stranger to one of them, who keep all their observations and discoveries to themselves, till they are extorted from them by mere dint of examination, and cross-examination. He told us indeed that some invisible agent supplied you every Sunday with a coach, which we were pleased with hearing; and this, I think, was the sum total of his information.

We are much concerned for Mr. Barham's loss; but it is well for that gentleman, that those amiable features in his character, which most incline one to sympathise with him, are the very graces and virtues that will strengthen him to bear it with equanimity and patience. People that have neither his light nor experience, will wonder that a disaster which would perhaps have broken their hearts, is not heavy enough to make any abatement in the cheerfulness of his.

Your books came yesterday. I shall not repeat to you what I said to Mrs. Unwin, after having read two or three of the letters. I admire the preface, in which you have given an air of novelty to a worn-out topic, and have actually engaged the favour of the reader by saying those things in a delicate and uncommon way, which in general are disgusting.

I suppose you know that Mr. Scott will be in town on Tuesday. He is likely to take possession of the Vicarage at last, with the best grace possible; at least, if he and Mr. Browne can agree upon the terms. The old gentleman I find would be glad to let the house, and abridge the stipend; in other words to make a good bargain for himself, and starve his curate.

Yours, my dear friend, W^M^. COWPER.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON, CHARLES SQUARE, HOXTON, LONDON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 4, 1781.

We have waited I *suppose* with equal impatience for a letter.

Our last dispatches crossed each other, so that each of us has claimed the posteriority, the epistolary race being always won by him that comes in last. This however has not been the only reason of my silence. I have been very busy in my way, and ere long you will see the fruit of my labour. I shall say nothing of it at present, except that *Truth*, though long since finished, must be postponed to this last production, and that the Progress of Error itself must not take the lead of it. Truth will be seasonable at any time, and though the Progress of Error has some connexion with the present day, it is not so closely related to the occurrences of it as the new one, which has the name of Table Talk. I have almost finished the copy of it which I intend for you, but cannot send it till from that I have transcribed another for myself, the original being written on so many scrips and scraps that it would be very troublesome to range them, and indeed I have no perfect copy of it but the fair one. I have not numbered the lines, but I suspect that it is longer than either of the others. Now I believe I shall hang up my harp for the remainder of the year, and,

> Since Eighty-one has had so much to do,
> Postpone what yet is left till Eighty-two.

We were much pleased with your Extracts: they were so faithful to the truth, that unless Mr. Madan has much of that candour he will not allow to others, they will put his friendship for you to a strong trial; and yet so affectionate, that he cannot be displeased without the violation of every thing that deserves the name of friendship. We both long to be informed of the reception they have met with, and take it for granted you will indulge our curiosity when you can. We have been told that the Bishop of London intends an answer to Thelyphthora, but I think his Lordship would hardly have put off the publication to so late a day. We have been told likewise that Mr. Riland is a convert to monogamy, but from some things we have heard since are obliged to doubt it.

Mr. Scott called on us the very day of his return from London. We are glad of his appointment to the curacy, and so I suppose are all, at least all but a very few, whose joy or sorrow on the occasion is of small consequence to any but themselves. And yet I think he will meet with troubles, and if my sagacity does not fail me much, I can see from what quarter they are likely to arise. Instrumentality is generally taken up with

ne reluctance, and laid down with a great deal more: but ere such a man, so well qualified in every respect for the rge assigned him, has the care of a people, there can be no sion for subordinate assistance. It is not his design to ac- t of it, and his refusal I am rather apprehensive will occa- a murmur somewhere. Even upon *your* account we are sed with Mr. Page's departure, as some disagreeables and wardnesses would probably have attended your interview. could not have refused you his pulpit, and yet there is on to believe that you are the last man in the kingdom he ld have wished to see in it. He has applied, or rather Warden Smith in his behalf, for the curacy at Ravenstone, Mr. Chapman has given no definitive answer. Mr. Scott ould suppose, would be sorry to see himself so succeeded. Dowbiggin's curate, (if I have spelt the strange name ht,) pays addresses to the same lady, and Mr. Jones has ogling her not a little. But who will be the happy man, ecture has not yet ventured to surmise.

'e wait with some impatience for the issue of Lord George's . Somebody, late from London, has brought hither the s that fresh disturbances are expected on the occasion, cially if he should be condemned: but what sort of pa- ism is it, or what sort of zeal, that is offended when the of the country take their course?

'e are both pretty well. Mrs. Unwin joins with me in love ourself and Mrs. Newton.

Yours, my dear Sir, WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

' DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 6, 1781.

high time you should consult your own peace of mind, not suffer the insatiable demands and unreasonable ex- ations of other men, to be a source of unhappiness to self. You have lived long enough in the world to know it swarms with people who are always ready to take ad- age of the generosity of such men as you; who say in hearts, when they meet with such disinterested treatment very one receives from your hands, "Now is the time;— man has a gentlemanly regard for his character, he loves e more than money, and will make any concessions, so that nay but approve himself to his own conscience. Let us

squeeze him; he will yield well; the more he complies the more we will insist, and make him pay dear for the character he wishes to deserve." I cannot doubt but your predecessor's curate is of this stamp; his demand wants nothing but a cocked pistol to make it felony, without benefit of clergy.

As to your proposal to the executors, if it does not give contentment, it must be for the reasons above mentioned; in which case I would recommend it to you by all means, to pay them exactly what they can lawfully demand for glebe and tithe, and not a farthing more, and in return to insist upon every penny you lay out in necessary repairs, and not a farthing less. It is wrong not to deal liberally with persons who themselves act upon liberal and honest principles; but it is weakness to be the willing dupe of artifice and to sacrifice one's own interest for the sake of satisfying the insatiable or unjust.

We are obliged to you for the rugs, a commodity that can never come to such a place as this at an unseasonable time. We have given one to an industrious poor widow with four children, whose sister overheard her shivering in the night, and with some difficulty brought her to confess the next morning that she was half perished for want of sufficient covering. Her said sister borrowed a rug for her at a neighbour's immediately, which she had used but one night when yours arrived. And I doubt not but we shall meet with others equally indigent, and deserving of your bounty.

I hear this morning that Lord George is acquitted. I take it for granted you was at the trial, for three reasons. First, because you was in town so lately; secondly, because you have a laudable curiosity, that acts as a spur upon your spirits on all such occasions; and thirdly, because you are slender and slim, and take up so little room that you are sure of a place when men of ampler dimensions are necessarily excluded. Tell us all that passed; and if he is indeed acquitted, let us know upon what point his acquittal turned, for at present I am rather at a loss to conceive how he could escape if the law was allowed to take its course, uninterrupted by fear and uncontrolled by a spirit of party.

Much good may your humanity do you, as it does so much good to others. You can no where find objects more entitled to your pity, than where your pity seeks them. A man whose vices and irregularities have brought his liberty and life into

anger, will always be with an eye of compassion by ose who understand what human nature is made of. And hile we acknowledge the erity the law to be founded pon principles of necessity e, are glad that there such a barrier provided fo peace of society, if we conder that the difference between ourselves and the culprit is nt of our own making, we shall be, as your are, tenderly affected ith the view of his misery, and not the less so because he has rought it upon himself. I look upon the worst man in helmsford gaol with a more favourable eye than upon ——, ho claims a servant's wages from one who never was his aster.

What goes before was written in the morning. This evening have read the trial as related in the General Evening, and an only add to what I said before in the words of Horace.

——— *Miror quo facto judicium illud*
Fugerit.

I give you joy of your own hair. No doubt you are a conderable gainer in your appearance by being disperiwigged. he best wig is that which most resembles the natural hair; hy then should he that has hair enough of his own, have reourse to imitation? I have little doubt, but that if an arm or leg could have been taken off with as little pain as attends the nputation of a curl or a lock of hair, the natural limb would ave been thought less becoming, or less convenient, by some ien, than a wooden one, and been disposed of accordingly.

Thanks for the salmon, it was perfectly good, as were the vo lobsters; and the two guineas came safe. Having some erses to transcribe, and being rather weary, I add no more, xcept our love to the whole family, jointly and severally. Iaving begun my letter with a miserable pen, I was not willing change it for a better lest my writing should not be all of a iece, but it has worn me and my patience quite out.

Yours ever, WM. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 15, 1781.

AM glad you were pleased with my report of so extraorlinary a case. If the thought of versifying the decisions of our ourts of justice had struck me, while I had the honour to ttend them, it would perhaps have been no difficult matter to

have compiled a volume of such amusing and interesting precedents; which, if they wanted the eloquence of the Greek or Roman oratory, would have amply compensated that deficiency by the harmony of rhyme and metre.

Your account of my Uncle and your Mother gave me great pleasure. I have long been afraid to inquire after some in whose welfare I always feel myself interested, lest the question should produce a painful answer. Longevity is the lot of so few, and is so seldom rendered comfortable by the associations of good health and good spirits, that I could not very reasonably suppose either your relations or mine so happy in those respects, as it seems they are. May they continue to enjoy those blessings so long as the date of life shall last. I do not think that in these costermonger days, as I have a notion Falstaff calls them, an antediluvian age is at all a desirable thing; but to live comfortably, while we do live, is a great matter, and comprehends in it every thing that can be wished for on this side the curtain that hangs between Time and Eternity.

Farewell my better friend than any I have to boast of either among the lords, or gentlemen of the House of Commons.

Yours ever, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 15, 1781.

It is possible that Mrs. Hill may not be herself a sufferer by the late terrible catastrophe in the Islands; but I should suppose by her correspondence with those parts, she may be connected with some that are. In either case, I condole with her; for it is reasonable to imagine that since the first tour that Columbus made into the Western world, it never before experienced such a convulsion; perhaps never since the foundation of the globe. You say the state grows old, and discovers many symptoms of decline. A writer, possessed of a genius for hypothesis, like that of Burnet, might construct a plausible argument to prove that the world itself is in a state of superannuation, if there be such a word. If not, there must be such a one as superannuity. When that just equilibrium that has hitherto supported all things, seems to fail, when the elements burst the chain that has bound them, the wind sweeping away the works of man, and man himself together with his works, and the ocean seeming to overleap the command, "Hitherto

lt thou come, and no further, and here shall thy proud
es be stayed," these irregular and prodigious vagaries seem
bespeak a decay, and foreboding, perhaps, not a very distant
olution. This thought has so run away with my attention,
t I have left myself no room for the little politics that have
y Great Britain for their object. Who knows but that while
ousand, and ten thousand tongues are employed in adjust-
the scale of our national concerns, in computing our new
s, and funds loaded with a debt of accumulating millions,
consummation of all things may discharge itself in a moment,
the scene of all this bustle disappear, as if it had never
n? Charles Fox would say, perhaps, he thought it very
kely. I question if he could prove even that. I am sure,
ever, he could not prove it to be impossible.

Yours, WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

Y DEAR FRIEND, Feb 18, 1781.

END you *Table Talk*. It is a medley of many things,
e that may be useful, and some that, for aught I know,
be very diverting. I am merry that I may decoy people
my company, and grave that they may be the better for it.
v and then I put on the garb of a philosopher, and take the
ortunity that disguise procures me, to drop a word in favour
eligion. In short, there is some froth, and here and there
it of sweet-meat, which seems to entitle it justly to the
ie of a certain dish the ladies call a trifle. I did not choose
e more facetious, lest I should consult the taste of my
lers at the expense of my own approbation; nor more
ous than I have been, lest I should forfeit theirs. A poet in
circumstances has a difficult part to act: one minute
ged to bridle his humour, if he has any, and the next, to
a spur to the sides of it: now ready to weep from a sense
he importance of his subject, and on a sudden constrained
augh, lest his gravity should be mistaken for dulness. If
be not violent exercise for the mind, I know not what is;
if any man doubt it, let him try. Whether all this manage-
nt and contrivance be necessary, I do not know, but am in-
ed to suspect that if my Muse was to go forth clad in
ker colour, without one bit of riband to enliven her ap-
rance, she might walk from one end of London to the other,
little noticed as if *she were one* of the sisterhood indeed.

As to the word you mention, I a little suspected that you would object to it, though I really thought that a book which cannot be supposed to have been written under a blessing, and that has certainly carried mischief with it into many families, deserved an epithet as harsh as that which I had given it. It is a bargain however that I have made with my lady Muse, never to defend, or stickle for any thing that you object to. So the line may stand if you please thus,

Abhorr'd Thelyphthora, &c.

—you will meet with the obnoxious word again, in the copy I send you now, but coupled with a substantive of so filthy a character, that I persuade myself you will have no objection to the use of it in such a connexion. I am no friend to the use of words taken from what an uncle of mine called the diabolical dictionary, but it happens sometimes that a coarse expression is almost necessary to do justice to the indignation excited by an abominable subject. I am obliged to you, however, for your opinion; and though poetry is apt to betray one into a warmth that one is not sensible of in writing prose, shall always desire to be set down by it.

We are glad that so able a writer as Mr. Hill has taken up the cudgels. He is old enough to know how to reason with precision, and young enough to do it with fire and spirit. In conflicting with a disputant like Mr. Madan, I should suppose these two qualifications almost equally necessary. A writer like him, who knows how to get the laugh on his side, would be pretty secure of having the world on his side, too, if his adversary had no skill in the use of the same weapon. It is such a merry world that Truth herself seems to want one of her principal recommendations, unless she will now and then condescend to the prevailing temper of her hearers. But you say you think it will do, and therefore I have no doubt of it.

Mr. Scott told Mr. Wilson yesterday or the day before, that he had again asked Mr. Raban whether or not he intended to continue his speaking, and that Mr. Raban would give him no determinate answer. This I had from Mr. Wilson himself. It will be well if that business ends peaceably. Nothing could be more tenderly cogent than your letter to his colleague, and he, for aught I know, may be properly influenced by it; but it seems plain that either the before-mentioned had not *seen it*, or that if he had, he had not felt it.—Geary Ball has

his wife. She was buried on Thursday, having left her
ıds a comfortable hope of her welfare.
ou had been married thirty-one years last Monday. When
married I was eighteen years of age, and had just left West-
ıter school. At that time, I valued a man according to his
ciency and taste in classical literature, and had the meanest
ion of all other accomplishments unaccompanied by that.
ɜd to see the vanity of what I had made my pride, and in
w years found that there were other attainments which
d carry a man more handsomely through life, than a
knowledge of what Homer and Virgil had left behind
.. In measure, as my attachment to these gentry wore off,
nd a more welcome reception among those whose acquaint-
it was more my interest to cultivate. But all this time was
t in painting a piece of wood, that had no life in it. At
began to think *indeed:* I found myself in possession of
baubles, but not one grain of solidity in all my treasures.
ı I learned the truth, and then I lost it; and there ends
ıistory. I would no more than you wish to live such a life
again, but for one reason. He that is carried to execu-
though through the roughest road, when he arrives at
destined spot, would be glad, notwithstanding the many
he met with, to repeat his journey.

Yours, my dear Sir, with our joint love, W. C.

TO MRS. HILL.

AR MADAM, Feb. 19, 1781.

EN a man, especially a man that lives altogether in the
ıtry, undertakes to write to a lady he never saw, he is the
wardest creature in the world. He begins his letter under
same sensations he would have, if he were to accost her in
on, only with this difference,—that he may take as much
as he pleases, for consideration, and need not write a sin-
word that he has not well weighed and pondered before-
l, much less a sentence that he does not think superemi-
ly clever. In every other respect, whether he be engaged
n interview, or in a letter, his behaviour is, for the most
, equally constrained and unnatural. He resolves, as they
to set the best leg foremost, which often proves to be what
libras calls—

——————— Not that of bone,
But much its better—th' wooden one.

His extraordinary effort only serves, as in the case of that hero, to throw him on the other side of his horse; and he owes his want of success, if not to absolute stupidity, to his most earnest endeavour to secure it.

Now I do assure you, Madam, that all these sprightly effusions of mine stand entirely clear of the charge of premeditation, and that I never entered upon a business of this kind with more simplicity in my life. I determined, before I began, to lay aside all attempts of the kind I have just mentioned; and being perfectly free from the fetters that self-conceit, commonly called bashfulness, fastens upon the mind, am, as you see, surprisingly brilliant.

My principal design is to thank you in the plainest terms, which always afford the best proof of a man's sincerity, for your obliging present. The seeds will make a figure hereafter in the stove of a much greater man than myself, who am a little man, with no stove at all. Some of them, however, I shall raise for my own amusement, and keep them, as long as they can be kept, in a bark heat, which I give them all the year; and in exchange for those I part with, I shall receive such exotics as are not too delicate for a green-house.

I will not omit to tell you, what, no doubt, you have heard already, though, perhaps, you have never made the experiment, that leaves gathered at the fall are found to hold their heat much longer than bark, and are preferable in every respect. Next year I intend to use them myself. I mention it because Mr. Hill told me, some time since, that he was building a stove, in which, I suppose, they will succeed much better than in a frame.

I beg to thank you again, Madam, for the very fine salmon you was so kind as to favour me with, which has all the sweetness of a Hertfordshire trout, and resembles it so much in flavour, that, blindfold, I should not have known the difference.

I beg, Madam, you will accept all these thanks, and believe them as sincere as they really are. Mr. Hill knows me well enough to be able to vouch for me, that I am not over-much addicted to compliments and fine speeches; nor do I mean either the one or the other, when I assure you that I am, dear Madam, not merely for his sake, but your own,

Your most obedient and affectionate servant,

W^m^. COWPER.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 25, 1781.

He that tells a long story should take care that it be not made a long story by his manner of telling it. His expression should be natural, and his method clear; the incidents should be interrupted by very few reflections, and parentheses should be entirely discarded. I do not know that poor Mr. Teedon guides himself in the affair of story-telling by any one of these rules, or by any rule indeed that I ever heard of. He has just left us, after a long visit, the greatest part of which he spent in the narration of a certain detail of facts that might have been compressed into a much smaller compass, and my attention to which has wearied and worn out all my spirits. You know how scrupulously nice he is in the choice of his expression; an exactness that soon becomes very inconvenient both to speaker and hearer, where there is not a great variety to choose out of. But Saturday evening is come, the time I generally devote to my correspondence with you; and Mrs. Unwin will not allow me to let it pass without writing, though, having done it herself, both she and you might well spare me upon the present occasion.

I have not yet read your extract from Mr. Scott's letter to Mr. Raban, though I have had an opportunity to do it. I thought it might be better to wait a little, in hope that there might be no need to do it at all. If hereafter it should be necessary to inform him of Mr. Scott's feelings and sentiments upon the subject, I will readily perform the office, and accompany the performance of it with such advice of my own, and such reasons as may happen to occur. In the mean time, I am a little apprehensive that opposition may provoke opposition in return, and set a sharper edge upon inclination, already sufficiently whetted to the business.

We are not the proper persons to give counsel or direction to Mr. Scott; our acquaintance with him is of too short a standing to warrant us in the use of such a liberty. But it is our joint opinion that he will not find himself easily and comfortably settled at Olney while he retains the curacy at Weston. The people of that parish are rather inclined to grumble; and, as we are informed, express some dissatisfaction on finding that they are to have but single service on the Sabbath; and the people here are not well pleased, though they will have the

same number of ordinances as before, that they are not to have them at the same time. Some, perhaps, may find the alteration a real inconvenience; and others, who may not find it so, will be glad of an occasion to pretend one. His resignation of Weston would at once annihilate all these complaints, and would, besides, place the Sunday evening meeting and the whole management of it entirely in his own hands, which, as it would prevent the possibility of any bickerings on the account of supernumerary speakers, we should think were a most desirable object. We are well aware that the vicinity of Weston to Ra'nstone is Mr. Scott's reason for still continuing to hold the former; but whether, when weighed in the balance against the mischiefs he may incur by doing it, it will be found a sufficient one, may be a matter deserving consideration. It can be no very difficult thing for his former people to reach him at Olney, though one mile will be added to their journey. If they really prefer him to their new minister, we think such a difficulty as that may be easily surmounted. Whether Mr. Scott's circumstances will afford the sacrifice, we do not know; but Mrs. Unwin thinks, and, if you ask me my opinion, I think so too, that if there be no other objection to the measure, he would do well to commit himself to Providence for a supply. Mr. Browne's age, and the probability, nearly related, I suppose, to a certainty, that Mr. Scott will succeed him in the living, seems, of itself, to reduce that difficulty almost to nothing. My paper is so intolerably bad, as you may perceive by the running of the ink, that it has quite worn out my patience.

Notwithstanding my purpose to shake hands with the Muse, and take my leave of her for the present, we have already had a *tête-à-tête*, since I sent you the last production. I am as much, or rather more pleased with my new plan, than with any of the foregoing. I mean to give a short summary of the Jewish story, the miraculous interpositions in behalf of that people, their great privileges, their abuse of them, and their consequent destruction; and then by way of comparison, such another display of the favours vouchsafed to this country, the similar ingratitude with which they have requited them, and the punishment they have therefore reason to expect, unless reformation interpose to prevent it. *Expostulation* is its present title; but I have not yet found in the writing it, that faci-

lity and readiness without which I shall despair to finish it well, or indeed to finish it at all.

Believe me, my dear Sir, with love to Mrs. N.,

Your ever affectionate, W^M. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 27, 1781.

In the first place my paper is insufferably bad, so that though this is the second sheet on which I have begun to write, and taken from another quire, I can hardly flatter myself that I shall be able to persevere to the end of it.

I thank you for your relation of Mr. Fytch's dispute with the Bishop; it affords matter for some reflections not altogether favourable to the episcopal order, as it is easy to see that if his lordship had the power, he does not want the inclination to use the thunder of the Vatican, and anathematize a poor gentleman that dares to oppose him, without mercy. I know not in what part of Scripture he will find it revealed, that a patron, by taking a bond of resignation from the person he presents, forfeits all hope of mercy in this world, and that which is to come. Yet he asserts it as gravely as if he knew it to be true; but the laity at this time of day are wiser than when they gave their bishops credit for omnipotence, that cheat will pass no longer.

Alas, poor Vestris! what a pitiable object, how truly French in his humiliation, when he bowed his head down to the stage and held it there, as if he never meant to raise it more! As humble in his abasement as exalted in his capers, equally French in both. Which is most entitled to compassion, the dancer who is obliged, at the expense of all that is called dignity in man, to stoop to the arbitrary requisitions of an enraged assembly, or that assembly themselves who think it worth their while to spend hours in bellowing for satisfaction from the concessions of a dancer? Considering that life does not last for ages, and they know it, it is not unreasonable to say, that both he and they might set a higher value upon their time, and devote it to a better purpose. It is possible, too, you may think that the maker of this wise reflection might himself have been better employed than in writing what follows upon the subject. I subscribe to the truth of the animadversion, and can only say, in my excuse, that the composition is short, did not cost

me much time, and may perhaps provoke a longer, which is not always useless. If you please you may send it to the Poet's Corner.

A CARD.

Poor Vestris, grieved beyond all measure,
To have incurred so much displeasure;
Although a Frenchman, disconcerted,
And though light heeled, yet heavy hearted,
Begs humbly to inform his friends,
Next first of April, he intends
To take a boat and row right down
To Cuckolds' point, from Richmond town;
And as he goes, alert and gay,
Leap all the bridges in his way
The boat borne downward with the tide,
Shall catch him safe on t'other side;
He humbly hopes by this expedient,
To prove himself their most obedient,
(Which shall be always his endeavour,)
And jump into their former favour.

I have not forgot, though when I wrote last I did not think of answering your kind invitation. I can only say at present, that Stock shall be my first visit, but that visiting at this time would be attended with insupportable awkwardness to me, and with such as the visited themselves would assuredly feel the weight of. My witticisms are only current upon paper now, and that sort of paper currency must serve, like the Congress dollars for want of the more valuable coin, myself.

We thank you for the intended salmon, and beg you would get yourself made Bishop of Chichester as soon as possible, that we may have to thank you for every kind of eatable fish the British coast produces. Yours ever, WM. COWPER.

I have hurried to the end as fast as possible, being weary of a letter that is one continued blot.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 5, 1781.

Since writing is become one of my principal amusements, and I have already produced so many verses on subjects that entitle them to a hope that they may possibly be useful, I should be sorry to suppress them entirely, or to publish them to no purpose, for want of that cheap ingredient, the name of the author. If my name therefore will serve them in any degree, as a pass-

port into the public notice, they are welcome to it; and Mr. Johnson will, if he pleases, announce me to the world by the style and title of "WILLIAM COWPER, Esq., of the Inner Temple." If you are of my mind, I think *Table Talk* will be the best to begin with, as the subjects of it are perhaps more popular; and one would wish, at first setting out, to catch the public by the ear, and hold them by it as fast as possible, that they may be willing to hear one, on a second and a third occasion.

The passage you object to I inserted merely by way of catch, and think that it is not unlikely to answer the purpose. My design was to say as many serious things as I could, and yet to be as lively as was compatible with such a purpose. Do not imagine that I mean to stickle for it as a pretty creature of my own that I am loth to part with—but I am apprehensive that without the sprightliness of that passage to introduce it, the following paragraph would not show to advantage.—If the world had been fiilled with men like yourself, I should never have written it; but thinking myself in a measure obliged to tickle, if I meant to please, I therefore affected a jocularity I did not feel.—As to the rest, wherever there is war, there is misery and outrage; notwithstanding which it is not only lawful to wish, but even a duty to pray for the success of one's country. And as to the neutralities, I really think the Russian virago an impertinent puss for meddling with us, and engaging half a score kittens of her acquaintance to scratch the poor old lion, who, if he has been insolent in his day, has probably acted no otherwise than they themselves would have acted in his circumstances, and with his power to embolden them.

I am glad that the myrtles reached you safe, but am persuaded from past experience that no management will keep them long alive in London, especially in the city. Our English Trots [1], the natives of the country, are for the most part too delicate to thrive there, much more the nice Italian. To give them, however, the best chance they can have, the lady must keep them well watered, giving them a moderate quantity in summer time every other day, and in winter about twice a week; not spring-water, for that would kill them. At Michaelmas, as much of the mould as can be taken out without disturbing the

[1] What word has been thus mis-printed I am unable to guess, and the original letter is one of those which have not been preserved in Mr. Newton's collection.—S.

roots must be evacuated, and its place supplied with fresh, the lighter the better. And once in two years the plants must be drawn out of their pots with the entire ball of earth about them, and the matted roots pared off with a sharp knife, when they must be planted again with an addition of rich light earth as before. Thus dealt with, they will grow luxuriantly in a greenhouse, where they can have plenty of sweet air, which is absolutely necessary to their health. I used to purchase them at Covent Garden almost every year, when I lived in the Temple; but even in that airy situation they were sure to lose their leaf in winter, and seldom recovered it again in spring. I wish them a better fate at Hoxton.

Olney has seen this day what it never saw before, and what will serve it to talk of, I suppose, for years to come. At eleven o'clock this morning a party of soldiers entered the town, driving before it another party, who, after obstinately defending the bridge for some time, were obliged to quit it, and run. They ran in very good order, frequently faced about and fired, but were at last obliged to surrender prisoners of war. There has been much drumming and shouting, much scampering about in the dirt, but not an inch of lace made in the town, at least at the Silver End of it.

It is our joint request that you will not again leave us unwritten to for a fortnight. We are so like yourselves in this particular, that we cannot help ascribing so long a silence to the worst cause. The longer your letters the better, but a short one is better than none.

Mrs. Unwin is pretty well, and adds the greetings of her love to mine. Yours, my dear friend, W^M^. COWPER.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 18, 1781.

A SLIGHT disorder in my larboard eye may possibly prevent my writing to you a long letter, and would perhaps have prevented my writing at all, if I had not known that you account a fortnight's silence a week too long.

I am sorry that I gave you the trouble to write twice upon so trivial a subject as the passage in question. I did not understand by your first objections to it, that you thought it so exceptionable as you do; but being better informed, I immediately resolved to expunge it, and subjoin a few lines which

ou will oblige me by substituting in its place. I am not very ond of weaving a political thread into any of my pieces, and iat for two reasons: first, because I do not think myself ualified, in point of intelligence, to form a decided opinion n any such topics; and secondly, because I think them, iough perhaps as popular as any, the most useless of all. he following verses are designed to succeed immediately fter

——— fights with justice on his side.
Let laurels, drench'd in pure Parnassian dews,
Reward *his* memory, dear to every Muse, &c.

I am obliged to you for your advice with respect to the ianner of publication, and feel myself inclined to be deterined by it. So far as I have proceeded on the subject of *Expostulation*, I have written with tolerable ease to myself, nd in my own opinion (for an opinion I am obliged to have bout what I write, whether I will or no,) with more emphasis nd energy than in either of the others. But it seems to open pon me with an abundance of matter, that forebodes a conderable length; and the time of year is come when, what ith walking and gardening, I can find but little leisure for ie pen. I mean, however, as soon as I have engrafted a new ion into the *Progress of Error*, instead of Thelyphthora, and hen I have transcribed *Truth*, and sent it to you, to apply iyself to the composition last undertaken, with as much inustry so I can. If therefore the three first are put into the ress while I am spinning and weaving the last, the whole iay perhaps be ready for publication before the proper season ill be past. I mean at present that a few select smaller ieces, about seven or eight perhaps, the best I can find in a ookfull that I have by me, shall accompany them. All toether, they will furnish, I should imagine, a volume of torable bulk, that need not be indebted to an unreasonable readth of margin for the importance of its figure.

If a Board of Enquiry were to be established, at which oets were to undergo an examination respecting the motives iat induced them to publish, and I were to be summoned to ttend, that I might give an account of mine, I think I could ruly say, what perhaps few poets could, that though I have o objection to lucrative consequences, if any such should llow, they are not my aim; much less is it my ambition to

exhibit myself to the world as a genius. What then, says Mr. President, can possibly be your motive? I answer, with a bow—Amusement. There is nothing but this—no occupation within the compass of my small sphere, Poetry excepted—that can do much towards diverting that train of melancholy thoughts, which, when I am not thus employed, are for ever pouring themselves in upon me. And if I did not publish what I write, I could not interest myself sufficiently in my own success, to make an amusement of it.

In my account of the battle fought at Olney, I laid a snare for your curiosity, and succeeded. I supposed it would have an enigmatical appearance, and so it had; but like most other riddles, when it comes to be solved, you will find that it was not worth the trouble of conjecture.—There are soldiers quartered at Newport and at Olney. These met, by order of their respective officers, in Emberton Marsh, performed all the manœuvres of a deedy battle, and the result was that this town was taken. Since I wrote, they have again encountered with the same intention; and Mr. Raban kept a room for me and Mrs. Unwin, that we might sit and view them at our ease. We did so, but it did not answer our expectation; for before the contest could be decided, the powder on both sides being expended, the combatants were obliged to leave it an undecided contest. If it were possible that when two great armies spend the night in expectation of a battle, a third could silently steal away their ammunition and arms of every kind, what a comedy would it make of that which always has such a tragical conclusion.

Yours, my dear friend, WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, April 2, 1781.

FINE weather, and a variety of *extraforaneous* occupations (search Johnson's dictionary for that word, and if not found there, insert it—for it saves a deal of circumlocution, and is very lawfully compounded) make it difficult, (excuse the length of a parenthesis, which I did not foresee the length of when I began it, and which may perhaps a little perplex the sense of what I am writing, though, as I seldom deal in that figure of speech, I have the less need to make an apology for doing it at present,) make it difficult (I say) for me to find opportunities

for writing. My morning is engrossed by the garden; and in the afternoon, till I have drunk tea, I am fit for nothing. At five o'clock we walk; and when the walk is over, lassitude recommends rest, and again I become fit for nothing. The current hour therefore which (I need not tell you) is comprised in the interval between four and five, is devoted to your service, as the only one in the twenty-four which is not otherwise engaged.

I do not wonder that you have felt a great deal upon the occasion you mention in your last, especially on account of the asperity you have met with in the behaviour of your friend. Reflect however that as it is natural to you to have very fine feelings, it is equally natural to some other tempers, to leave those feelings entirely out of the question, and to speak to you, and to act towards you, just as they do towards the rest of mankind, without the least attention to the irritability of your system. Men of a rough and unsparing address should take great care that they be always in the right; the justness and propriety of their sentiments and censures being the only tolerable apology that can be made for such a conduct, especially in a country where civility of behaviour is inculcated even from the cradle. But in the instance now under our contemplation I think you a sufferer under the weight of an animadversion not founded in truth, and which, consequently, you did not deserve. I account him faithful in the pulpit, who dissembles nothing that he believes, for fear of giving offence. To accommodate a discourse to the judgement and opinion of others, for the sake of pleasing them, though by doing so we are obliged to depart widely from our own, is to be unfaithful to ourselves at least, and cannot be accounted fidelity to him whom we profess to serve. But there are few men who do not stand in need of the exercise of charity and forbearance; and the gentleman in question has afforded you an ample opportunity in this respect, to show how readily, though differing in your views, you can practice all that he could possibly expect from you, if your persuasion corresponded exactly with his own.

With respect to *Monsieur le Curé*, I think you not quite excusable for suffering such a man to give you any uneasiness at all. The grossness and injustice of his demand ought to be its own antidote. If a robber should miscall you a pitiful fellow

for not carrying a purse full of gold about you, would his brutality give you any concern? I suppose not. Why then have you been distressed in the present instance?

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, April 8, 1781.

SINCE I commenced author, my letters are even less worth your acceptance than they were before. I shall soon, however, lay down the character, and cease to trouble you with directions to a printer, at least till the summer is over. If I live to see the return of winter, I may perhaps assume it again: but my appetite for fame is not keen enough to combat with my love of fine weather, my love of indolence, and my love of gardening employments.

I send you by Mr. Old my Works complete, bound in brown paper, and numbered according to the series in which I would have them published. With respect to the poem called *Truth*, it is *so* true that it can hardly fail of giving offence to an unenlightened reader. I think, therefore, that in order to obviate in some measure those prejudices that will naturally erect their bristles against it, an explanatory preface, such as you (and nobody so well as you) can furnish me with, will have every grace of propriety to recommend it. Or, if you are not averse to the task, and your avocations will allow you to undertake it, and if you think it would still be more proper, I should be glad to be indebted to you for the preface to the whole. I wish you, however, to consult your own judgement upon the occasion, and to engage in either of these works, or neither, just as your discretion guides you.

The observations contained in the Progress of Error, though, as you say, of general application, have yet such an unlucky squint at the author of Thelyphthora, that they will be almost as sure to strike him in the sore place, as he will be to read the poem, if published with my name; and I would by no means wish to involve you in the resentment that I shall probably incur by those lines; which might be the consequence of our walking arm in arm into the public notice. For my own part I have my answer ready, if I should be called upon; but as you have corresponded with him upon the subject, and have closed that correspondence in as amicable a way as the subject

of it would permit, you may perhaps think it would appear like a departure from the friendly moderation of your conduct, to give an open countenance and encouragement to a work in which he seems to be so freely treated. But after all there is no necessity for your name, though I should choose by all means to be honoured with it, if there be no unanswerable objection. —You will find the substituted passage in the Progress of Error, just where the ground was occupied by the reflections upon Mr. Madan's performance.

Mr. Hill's answer seems to have no fault but what it owes to a virtue. His great charity and candour have in my mind excluded from it that animation and energy, which even a good man might lawfully show when answering a book which could hardly fail to excite a little indignation. Mildness and meekness are not more plainly recommended in Scripture in some instances, than sharpness of reproof and severity in others.

I am very well satisfied with the commendation the reviewers have bestowed upon Sir Airy. It is as much as I hoped for; and I question much whether they will speak so favourably of my next publication.

I have written a great deal to-day, which must be my excuse for an abrupt conclusion. Our love attends you both. We are in pretty good health; Mrs. Unwin indeed better than usual: and as to me, I ail nothing but the incurable ailment.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

Thanks for the cocoa-nut.

I send a cucumber, not of my own raising, and yet raised by me.

Solve this enigma, dark enough
To puzzle any brains
That are not downright puzzle-proof,
And eat it for your pains.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Monday, April 23, 1781.

HAVING not the least doubt of your ability to execute just such a preface as I should wish to see prefixed to my publication, and being convinced that you have no good foundation for those which you yourself entertain upon the subject, I neither withdraw my requisition, nor abate one jot of the earnestness with which I made it. I admit the delicacy of the occasion, but am far from apprehending that you will therefore find it difficult

to succeed. You can draw a hair-stroke where another man would make a blot as broad as a sixpence.

With respect to the Heathen and what I have said about them, the subject is of that kind which every man must settle for himself, and on which we can proceed no further than hypothesis and opinion will carry us. I was willing however to obviate an objection I foresaw, and to do it in a way not derogatory from the truth of the Gospel, yet at the same time as conciliatory as possible to the prejudices of the objector. After all, indeed, I see no medium; either we must suppose them lost, or if saved, saved by virtue of the only propitiation. They seem to me, on the principles of equity, to stand in much the same predicament, and to be entitled, (at least according to human apprehensions of justice,) to much the same allowance as Infants: both partakers of a sinful nature, and both unavoidably ignorant of the remedy. Infants I suppose universally saved, because impeccable; and the virtuous Heathen, having had no opportunity to sin against Revelation, and having made a conscientious use of the light of Nature, I should suppose saved too. But I drop a subject on which I could say a good deal more, for two reasons; first, because I am writing a letter, and not an essay; and secondly, because after all I might write about it, I could come to no certain conclusion.

I once had thoughts of annexing a few smaller pieces to those I have sent you; but having only very few that I accounted worthy to bear them company, and those for the most part on subjects less calculated for utility than amusement, I changed my mind. If hereafter I should accumulate a sufficient number of these *minutiæ* to make a miscellaneous volume, which is not impossible I may perhaps collect and print them.

I am much obliged to you for the interest you take in the appearance of my Poems, and much pleased by the alacrity with which you do it. Your favourable opinion of them affords me a comfortable presage with respect to that of the public; for though I make allowances for your partiality to me and mine, because mine, yet I am sure you would not suffer me unadmonished to add myself to the multitude of insipid rhymers, with whose productions the world is already too much pestered.

It is worth while to send *you* a riddle, you make such a variety of guesses, and turn and tumble it about with such an industrious curiosity. The solution of that in question is

—let me see; it requires some consideration to explain it, even though I made it. I raised the seed that produced the plant that produced the fruit, that produced the seed that produced the fruit I sent you. This latter seed I gave to the gardener of Terningham, who brought me the cucumber you mention. Thus you see I raised it—that is to say, I raised it virtually by having raised its progenitor; and yet I did not raise it, because the identical seed from which it grew was raised at a distance. You observe I did not speak rashly, when I spoke of it as dark enough to pose an Œdipus; and have no need to call your own sagacity in question for falling short of the discovery.

A report has prevailed at Olney that you are coming in a fortnight; but taking it for granted that you know best when you shall come, and that you will make us happy in the same knowledge as soon as you are possessed of it yourself, I did not venture to build any sanguine expectations upon it.

Mr. Madan seems to be in the condition of that gentleman of most candid memory, who though he might be confuted was resolved never to be convinced. I have at last read the second volume of his work, and had some hope that I should prevail with myself to read the first likewise. But endless repetitions, unwarranted conclusions, and wearisome declamations, conquered my perseverance, and obliged me to leave the task unfinished. He boasts in his Introduction that he has attended to a happy mixture of the *utile dulci*. The former I find not, and the latter so sparingly afforded as to be scarce perceptible. You told us, some time since, that his reasons for writing on such a subject were certainly known to a few. If you judge it not imprudent to communicate them by the post, we should be glad to know them too. You know that we are hermetically sealed, and that no secret is the less a secret for our participation of it. I began his book at the latter end, because the first part of it was engaged when I received the second; but I had not so good an appetite as a soldier of the Guards, who, I was informed when I lived in London, would for a small matter eat up a cat alive, beginning at her tail and finishing with her whiskers.

Mrs. Unwin sends her love. She is tolerably well, and will rejoice to hear that her application in behalf of your nephew

has succeeded. Not having lately heard from Stock, ignorant of what has passed.

My love to Mrs. Newton.

Yours, *ut semper*, WM. COW]

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR SIR, April 25,

WHILE I thought of publishing only the four pieces sent, I did not give myself the trouble to peruse w attention what smaller poems I have by me. But on fi necessary to make an addition, I have again looke over, and am glad to find after an enquiry as critical author can be supposed to make into the merits of his o ductions, that I am in possession of eight hundred lin may safely, I hope, venture to show themselves in publ these I would add those copies I translated from Bourne, but having no transcript of them myself, I m you to take the trouble either to send them hither, or them written out for me. The whole together will nearly to a thousand lines, and as I suppose Mr. Johns not allot more than one page to one piece, they will fi paper than the same number of lines written in contin and upon the same subject. There are times when I write, and the present is such a time; and were it not, I yet prefer this method of swelling the volume, to that of the vacuity with one long-winded poem like the precedi

A variety of measures on a variety of subjects will both the mind and the ear, and may possibly prevei weariness of which there might otherwise be no small da

I hope that what I said in my last has determined undertake the preface; in that case the gentleman yo tioned, (Mr. Foster,) must upon your walking out lines, march in to supply your place. I have no out send you, neither shall I have time for any thing but t scribe, which I will do as fast as I can to be legible, and my labours to you by the first opportunity; title-pa motto at the same time.

We are sorry that you have not heard from Stock, bu and have no doubt notwithstanding this silence, that th will be settled to your wish. I write in much haste, an

only to add my thanks for your negotiations, and our joint love to you both, with remembrance to all friends at Hoxton.

Yours, my dear Sir, WM. COWPER.

I am at this time a member of the Inner Temple.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

May 1, 1781.

YOUR mother says I *must* write, and *must* admits of no apology; I might otherwise plead, that I have nothing to say, that I am weary, that I am dull, that it would be more convenient therefore for you, as well as for myself, that I should let it alone; but all these pleas, and whatever pleas besides either disinclination, indolence, or necessity might suggest, are overruled, as they ought to be, the moment a lady adduces her irrefragable argument, *you must*. You have still however one comfort left, that what I must write, you may, or may not read, just as it shall please you; unless Lady Anne at your elbow should say, you *must* read it, and then like a true knight you will obey without looking out for a remedy.

I do not love to harp upon strings that, to say the least, are not so musical as one would wish. But you I know have many a time sacrificed your own feelings to those of others, and where an act of charity leads you, are not easily put out of your way. This consideration encourages me just to insinuate that your silence on the subject of a certain nomination is distressful to more than you would wish, in particular to the little boy whose clothes are outgrown and worn out; and to his mother, who is unwilling to furnish him with a new suit, having reason to suppose that the long blue petticoat would soon supersede it, if she should.

In the press, and speedily will be published, in one volume octavo, price three shillings, Poems, by William Cowper, of the Inner Temple, Esq. You may suppose, by the size of the publication, that the greatest part of them have been long kept secret, because you yourself have never seen them: but the truth is, that they are most of them, except what you have in your possession, the produce of the last winter. Two-thirds of the compilation will be occupied by four pieces, the first of which sprung up in the month of December, and the last of them in the month of March. They contain, I suppose, in all, about two thousand and five hundred lines: are known, or to

be known in due time, by the names of *Table Talk—The Progress of Error—Truth—Expostulation.* Mr. Newton writes a Preface, and Johnson is the publisher. The principal, I may say the only reason why I never mentioned to you, till now, an affair which I am just going to make known to all the world (if *that* Mr. All-the-world should think it worth his knowing,) has been this; that till within these few days, I had not the honour to know it myself. This may seem strange, but it is true; for not knowing where to find underwriters who would choose to insure them; and not finding it convenient to a purse like mine, to run any hazard, even upon the credit of my own ingenuity, I was very much in doubt for some weeks, whether any bookseller would be willing to subject himself to an ambiguity, that might prove very expensive in case of a bad market. But Johnson has heroically set all peradventures at defiance, and takes the whole charge upon himself. So out I come. I shall be glad of my Translations from Vincent Bourne, in your next frank. My Muse will lay herself at your feet immediately on her first public appearance. Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR, May 9, 1781.

I AM in the press, and it is in vain to deny it. But how mysterious is the conveyance of intelligence from one end to the other of your great city!—Not many days since, except one man, and he but a little taller than yourself, all London was ignorant of it; for I do not suppose that the public prints have yet announced this most agreeable tidings, the title-page, which is the basis of the advertisement, having so lately reached the publisher; and now it is known to you, who live at least two miles distant from my confidant upon the occasion.

My labours are principally the production of the last winter; all indeed, except a few of the minor pieces. When I can find no other occupation, I think, and when I think, I am very apt to do it in rhyme. Hence it comes to pass that the season of the year which generally pinches off the flowers of poetry, unfolds mine, such as they are, and crowns me with a winter garland. In this respect therefore, I and my contemporary bards are by no means upon a par. They write when the delightful influences of fine weather, fine prospects, and a

brisk motion of the animal spirits, make poetry almost the language of nature; and I, when icicles depend from all the leaves of the Parnassian laurel, and when a reasonable man would as little expect to succeed in verse, as to hear a blackbird whistle. This must be my apology to you for whatever want of fire and animation you may observe in what you will shortly have the perusal of. As to the public, if they like me not, there is no remedy. A friend will weigh and consider all disadvantages, and make as large allowances as an author can wish, and larger perhaps than he has any right to expect; but not so the world at large; whatever they do not like, they will not by any apology be persuaded to forgive, and it would be in vain to tell *them*, that I wrote my verses in January, for they would immediately reply, "Why did not you write them in May?" A question that might puzzle a wiser head than we poets are generally blessed with. W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May 13, 1781.

We thank you for the anecdote sent us in compliance with our desire. Added at the end of a certain treatise, it would operate as a powerful antidote to the erroneous opinion it inculcates, and sufficiently explain the mystery of a sensible man addicting himself to a silly enterprise, and vainly endeavouring to accomplish it by reasonings that would disgrace a boy.

You are not sorry I suppose that your correspondence with him is at an end; you might perhaps have easily secured the continuance of it had you been less explicit, but it must have been at the expense of that point of honour which a spiritual warrior of your rank and character, will upon no consideration abandon. A gentler reprehension, an air of pleasantry, or any disguise of your real sentiments whatever, would still have left room for what he would have called a friendly intercourse. But your friendship for him has now produced the strongest proof of its sincerity; and though he is not able to bear it, the time may come (it will be unhappy for him indeed if it never should,) when he will know how to value it and to thank you for it.

The rudeness of his answer,—I was going to give it a harsher character,—exceeds all that I could have thought it possible he could be provoked to treat you with, merely because you

cannot see with his eyes, and have had the boldness to tell him so.

M. quarrels with N., for M. wrote a book,
And N. did not like it, which M. could not brook,
So he call'd him a bigot, a wrangler, a monk,
With as many hard names as would line a good trunk,
And set up his back, and claw'd like a cat,
But N. liked it never the better for that.
Now N. had a wife, and he wanted but one,
Which stuck in M.'s stomach as cross as a bone.
It has always been reckon'd a just cause of strife
For a man to make free with another man's wife;
But the strife is the strangest that ever was known,
If a man must be scolded for loving his own.

Mrs. Unwin rejoices that the nomination affair is at last accomplished, she accounts your thanks for it more than a sufficient recompense, and is sorry it is not in her power to give you and Mrs. Newton more important proofs of her regard.—I asked her what I should say, and she bade me say all this.

I am ready to wish that you may not yet have sent the Translations of Bourne to Johnson, because I find it necessary to put forth a new edition of the two last stanzas of the Cricket. One of them was disgraced by a false rhyme, and the other was too long by two lines. By the way Mr. Unwin has sent me three of them, but the Glowworm and the Cantab he has not sent.

This last victory over the Americans will go near to verify my poetical prediction, and Sir Joshua will have nothing to do but to record the completion of a prophecy which is the more respectable, because when first delivered, it seemed so very improbable. Rebellion it should seem must soon be extinguished, crippled by defeat and destitute of resources, and extinction of the war will soon follow it. I have taken prudent care however to save my credit at all events, and having foretold both fair weather and foul, the former in the piece just alluded to, and the latter in Expostulation, fall back, fall edge, as they say, like the Newton-shepherds, my soothsaying is sure to be accomplished.

There is, I am afraid, a perverseness and persevering spirit of opposition to Mr. Scott, that will grieve you, though you will not suffer it to disturb your temper. Mr. Scott acts

wisely, and takes no notice of it either in conversation with the people or in the pulpit.

The ducks could not be pulled, because it was necessary they should be killed on a Sunday.

Yours, my dear friend, and Mrs. Newton's,

WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May 21, 1781.

I AM not so impatient to see myself in print, as to be at all disconcerted by the delay. I was sufficiently aware, that with Johnson's utmost despatch he would be too late, and that the summer, which is just at the door, would tread too close upon the heels of the publication. I had much rather therefore proceed leisurely as he advises, (if he will indeed go on to print at his leisure,) and so avail myself of the complete opportunity that winter will bring with it, than open my stall just when the Fair is over.

The case standing thus, and this leisurely proceeding being so favourable to my purpose, I have conceived a design to save you the trouble of revising the proofs, and that for two reasons, first, because your time is precious, and mine is not so; and secondly, because having written nothing of late that I do not retain *memoritèr*, it is impossible for the alteration of a word, or the least inaccuracy to escape me.

I mean therefore to furnish myself with London and country franks, and to desire Johnson to transmit the proofs to me.

It would have a strange appearance, and is hardly a supposable case, but for amusement sake we will endeavour to suppose it for a moment. A man (he must be a confirmed stoic) stands encompassed by a dozen others,—one tweaks his nose, one pinches his sides, one slaps his right cheek, and one his left; one treads upon his toes, one spits in his face, one thrusts pins into the calves of his legs, and one kicks him on the breech; one raps the knuckles of one hand, one of the other; one sets a fool's cap upon his head, and another, a man of some wit and with a reasonable share of humour, sneers, laughs, and makes faces at him, while his associates are thus employed in tormenting him. The patient, (for patient he must needs be if he keeps his senses,) affects to be all the while perfectly at his ease, denies that any body touches him, calls them his dear friends, observes that it is a very fine day, and takes snuff.

Extravagant as this picture may seem, it bears I think some resemblance to Mr. Madan. He is or would seem to be insensible of the many smart strokes he receives from his antagonists; they are a parcel of insignificant wretches,—some of them indeed his very good friends, whose opposition to his book is rather an argument of their own bigotry or folly than any inconvenience to him; and as to the rest, whether they write, or the wind whistles, is a matter of the most absolute indifference. And yet, as in the case above delineated, the unhappy gentleman must undoubtedly suffer a great deal, so must the author of Thelyphthora, if the two clubs of learning and logic, and the stinging nettles of wit and humour can possibly make him feel. By the way we shall be glad if you can bring Mr. Barton's book with you.

Mrs. Unwin sends her love. We both wait for the day appointed with a pleasing sort of impatience, and comfort ourselves with the thought that though we cannot hasten its approach one moment, it will come, and must come, and that the interval, let what will happen, and how long soever it may seem, can be but a fortnight. We mean if you are able to keep your assignation.

She will be obliged to Mrs. Newton if she will be so good as to bring with her six tooth brushes, a quarter of a pound of oystershell powder, and two pounds of the same bohea as before. We shall hope to see you at dinner on Saturday, and as much sooner as you please; we always dine at two.

Yours, my dear Sir, and Mrs. Newton's,

Con ogni rispetto affectuoso, WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May 23, 1781.

If a writer's friends have need of patience, how much more the writer! You desire to see my muse in public, and mine to gratify you, must both suffer the mortification of delay. I expected that my trumpeter would have informed the world by this time of all that is needful for them to know upon such an occasion; and that an advertising blast, blown through every newspaper, would have said—"The poet is coming!"—But man, especially man that writes verse, is born to disappointments, as surely as printers and booksellers are born to be the most dilatory and tedious of all creatures. The pl

English of this magnificent preamble is, that the season of publication is just elapsed, that the town is going into the country every day, and that my book cannot appear till they return, that is to say, not till next winter.

This misfortune however comes not without its attendant advantage; I shall now have, what I should not otherwise have had, an opportunity to correct the press myself; no small advantage upon any occasion, but especially important, where poetry is concerned! A single erratum may knock out the brains of a whole passage, and that perhaps, which of all others the unfortunate poet is the most proud of. Add to this, that now and then there is to be found in a printing-house a presumptuous intermeddler, who will fancy himself a poet too, and what is still worse, a better than he that employs him. The consequence is, that with cobbling, and tinkering, and patching on here and there a shred of his own, he makes such a difference between the original and the copy, that an author cannot know his own work again. Now as I choose to be responsible for nobody's dulness but my own, I am a little comforted, when I reflect that it will be in my power to prevent all such impertinence; and yet not without your assistance. It will be quite necessary, that the correspondence between me and Johnson should be carried on without the expense of postage, because proof sheets would make double or treble letters, which expense, as in every instance it must occur twice, first when the packet is sent, and again when it is returned, would be rather inconvenient to me, who, as you perceive, am forced to live by my wits, and to him, who hopes to get a little matter no doubt by the same means. Half a dozen franks therefore to me, and *totidem* to him, will be singularly acceptable, if you can, without feeling it in any respect a trouble, procure them for me.

My neckcloths being all worn out, I intend to wear stocks, but not unless they are more fashionable than the former. In that case, I shall be obliged to you if you will buy me a handsome stock-buckle, for a very little money; for twenty or twenty-five shillings perhaps a second-hand affair may be purchased that will make a figure at Olney.

I am much obliged to you for your offer to support me in a translation of Bourne. It is but seldom, however, and never except for my amusement, that I translate, because I find it disagreeable to work by another man's pattern; I should at

least be sure to find it so in a business of any length. Again, *that* is epigrammatic and witty in Latin, which would be perfectly insipid in English; and a translator of Bourne would frequently find himself obliged to supply what is called the turn, which is in fact the most difficult, and the most expensive part of the whole composition, and could not perhaps, in many instances, be done with any tolerable success. If a Latin poem is neat, elegant, and musical, it is enough; but English readers are not so easily satisfied. To quote myself, you will find, in comparing the Jackdaw with the original, that I was obliged to sharpen a point which, though smart enough in the Latin, would, in English, have appeared as plain, and as blunt, as the tag of a lace. I love the memory of Vinny Bourne. I think him a better Latin poet than Tibullus, Propertius, Ausonius, or any of the writers in *his* way, except Ovid, and not at all inferior to *him*. I love him too with a love of partiality, because he was usher of the fifth form at Westminster, when I passed through it. He was so good-natured, and so indolent, that I lost more than I got by him; for he made me as idle as himself. He was such a sloven, as if he had trusted to his genius as a cloak for every thing that could disgust you in his person; and indeed in his writings he has almost made amends for all. His humour is entirely original; he can speak of a magpie or a cat in terms so exquisitely appropriated to the character he draws, that one would suppose him animated by the spirit of the creature he describes. And with all this drollery there is a mixture of rational, and even religious reflection at times: and always an air of pleasantry, good-nature, and humanity, that makes him, in my mind, one of the most amiable writers in the world. It is not common to meet with an author who can make you smile, and yet at nobody's expense; who is always entertaining, and yet always harmless; and who, though always elegant, and classical to a degree not always found even in the classics themselves, charms more by the simplicity and playfulness of his ideas, than by the neatness and purity of his verse; yet such was poor Vinny. I remember seeing the Duke of Richmond set fire to his greasy locks, and box his ears to put it out again.

I am delighted with your project, but not with the view I have of its success. If the world would form its opinion of the clerical character at large, from yours in particular, I have no

doubt but the event would be as prosperous as you could wish. But I suppose there is not a member of either house who does not see within the circle of his own acquaintance, a minister, perhaps many ministers, whose integrity would contribute but little to the effect of such a bill. Here are seven or eight in the neighbourhood of Olney, who have shaken hands with sobriety, and who would rather suppress the church, were it not for the emoluments annexed, than discourage the sale of strong beer in a single instance. Were I myself in Parliament, I am not sure that I could favour your scheme; are there not to be found within five miles of almost every neighbourhood, parsons who would purchase well accustomed public-houses, because they could secure them a license, and patronize them when they had done? I think no penalty would prevent the abuse, on account of the difficulty of proof, and that no ingenuity could guard against all the possible abuses. To sum up all in few words, the generality of the clergy, especially within these last twenty or thirty years, have worn their circingles so loose, that I verily believe no measure that proposed an accession of privilege to an order which the laity retain but little respect for, would meet with the countenance of the legislature. You will do me the justice to suppose that I do not say these things to gratify a splenetic humour or a censorious turn of mind; far from it,—it may add, perhaps, to the severity of the foregoing observations to assert, but if it does, I cannot help asserting, that I verily believe them to be founded upon fact, and that I am sure, partly from my own knowledge, and partly from the report of those whose veracity I can depend upon, that in this part of the world at least, many of the most profligate characters are the very men to whom the morals, and even the souls of others are entrusted; and I cannot suppose that the diocese of Lincoln, or this part of it in particular, is more unfortunate in that respect than the rest of the kingdom.

Since I began to write long poems, I seem to turn up my nose at the idea of a short one. I have lately entered upon one, which, if ever finished, cannot easily be comprised in much less than a thousand lines! But this must make part of a second publication, and be accompanied, in due time, by others not yet thought of; for it seems (which I did not know till the bookseller had occasion to tell me so) that single pieces stand

no chance, and that nothing less than a volume will go down. You yourself afford me a proof of the certainty of this intelligence, by sending me franks which nothing less than a volume can fill. I have accordingly sent you one, but am obliged to add, that had the wind been in any other point of the compass, or, blowing as it does from the east, had it been less boisterous, you must have been contented with a much shorter letter, but the abridgement of every other occupation is very favourable to that of writing.

I am glad I did not expect to hear from you by this post, for the boy has lost the bag in which your letter must have been enclosed;—another reason for my prolixity!

Yours affectionately, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May, 1781.

I BELIEVE I never give you trouble without feeling more than I give; so much by way of preface and apology.

Thus stands the case. Johnson has begun to print, and Mr. Newton has already corrected the first sheet. This unexpected despatch makes it necessary for me to furnish myself with means of communication, viz. the franks, as soon as may be. There are reasons (I believe I mentioned them in my last) why I choose to revise the proofs myself:—nevertheless, if your delicacy must suffer the puncture of a pin's point in procuring the franks for me, I release you entirely from the task; you are as free as if I had never mentioned them. But you will oblige me by a speedy answer upon this subject, because it is expedient that the printer should know to whom he is to send his copy; and when the press is once set, those humble servants of the poets are rather impatient of any delay, because the types are wanted for other authors, who are equally in haste to be born.

This fine weather I suppose sets you on horseback, and allures the ladies into the garden. If I was at Stock, I should be of their party; and while they sat knotting or netting in the shade, should comfort myself with the thought, that I had not a beast under me, whose walk would seem tedious, whose trot would jumble me, and whose gallop might throw me into a ditch. What nature expressly designed me for I have never been able to conjecture; I seem to myself so universally dis-

qualified for the common and customary occupations and amusements of mankind. When I was a boy, I excelled at cricket and foot-ball, but the fame I acquired by achievements in that way is long since forgotten, and I do not know that I have made a figure in any thing since. I am sure however that she did not design me for a horseman; and that, if all men were of my mind, there would be an end of all jockeyship for ever. I am rather straitened in time, and not very rich in materials, therefore, with our joint love to you all, conclude myself,

Yours ever, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May 28, 1781.

I AM much obliged to you for the pains you have taken with my *Table Talk*, and wish that my *vivâ voce* Table Talk could repay you for the trouble you have had with the written one.

I am quite surprised at Johnson's diligence, and began to wish, while reading your account of it, that I had left the business of correction in your hands; but presently recollecting that it is a tedious troublesome employment, and fit only for the author himself to be burthened with, I relapsed into my former sentiment. My franks are not yet ready, but I shall lose no time in procuring them if they are to be got. I enclose a line to Johnson, to tell him that if in the mean time, and while you are absent from town, another parcel of the proof should be ready for revisal, I wish him to send it hither by the diligence. I am as well convinced of the accuracy and exactness with which you would perform the task, as it is possible for me to be of my own, and if I can obtain no franks shall after all have recourse to your assistance.

The season is wonderfully improved within this day or two; and if these cloudless skies are continued to us, or rather if the cold winds do not set in again, promises you a pleasant excursion, as far, at least, as the weather can conduce to make it such. You seldom complain of too much sunshine, and if you are prepared for a heat somewhat like that of Africa, the south walk in our long garden will exactly suit you. Reflected from the gravel, and from the walls, and beating upon your head at the same time, it may possibly make you wish you could enjoy for an hour or two that immensity of shade afforded by the gigantic trees still growing in the land of your captivity.

If you could spend a day now and then in those forests, and return with a wish to England, it would be no small addition to the number of your best pleasures. But *pennæ non hominis datæ*. The time will come perhaps, (but death must come first,) when you will be able to visit them without either danger, trouble, or expense; and when the contemplation of those well-remembered scenes will awaken in you emotions of gratitude and praise surpassing all you could possibly sustain at present. In this sense, I suppose, there is a heaven upon earth at all times, and that the disembodied spirit may find a peculiar joy arising from the contemplation of those places it was formerly conversant with, and so far, at least, be reconciled to a world it was once so weary of, as to use it in the delightful way of thankful recollection.

Miss Catlett must not think of any other lodging than we can without any inconvenience, as we shall with all possible pleasure, furnish her with. We can each of us say,—that is, I can say it in Latin, and Mrs. Unwin in English,—*Nihil tui à me alienum puto*. She shall have a great bed and a great room, and we shall have the chamber we always occupy, when we have company, and should certainly occupy, if she was not of the party. This state of the case leaves no room for the least objection; we desire therefore that you will give our love to her, tell her we shall expect her, and that she will be but half as welcome to us if she sleeps any where else.

Having two more letters to write, I find myself obliged to shorten this; so once more wishing you a good journey, and ourselves the happiness of receiving you in good health and spirits, I remain

Affectionately yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 5, 1781.

If the old adage be true, that "he gives twice, who gives speedily," it is equally true, that he who not only uses expedition in giving, but gives more than was asked, gives thrice at least. Such is the style in which Mr. Smith confers a favour. He has not only sent me franks to Johnson, but, under another cover, has added six to you. These last, for aught that appears by your letter, he threw in of his own mere bounty. I beg that my share of thanks may not be

ing on this occasion, and that when you write to him next
will assure him of the sense I have of the obligation, which
e more flattering, as it includes a proof of his predilection
vour of the poems his franks are destined to enclose.
they not forfeit his good opinion hereafter, nor yours, to
a I hold myself indebted in the first place, and who have
ly given me credit for their deservings! Your mother says,
although there are passages in them containing opinions
a will not be universally subscribed to, the world will at
allow—what my great modesty will not permit me to sub-
I have the highest opinion of her judgment, and know,
ving experienced the soundness of them, that her observa-
are always worthy of attention and regard. Yet, strange
may seem, I do not feel the vanity of an author, when
commends me;—but I feel something better, a spur to
iligence, and a cordial to my spirits, both together animat-
ie to deserve, at least not to fall short of her expecta-
. For I verily believe, if my dulness should earn me the
cter of a dunce, the censure would affect her more than
not that I am insensible of the value of a good name, either
nan or an author. Without an ambition to attain it, it is
utely unattainable under either of those descriptions.
ay life having been in many respects a series of mortifica-
and disappointments, I am become less apprehensive and
ssible perhaps in some points, than I should otherwise
been; and though I should be exquisitely sorry to dis-
my friends, could endure my own share of the affliction
a reasonable measure of tranquillity.
ese seasonable showers have poured floods upon all the
bouring parishes, but have passed us by. My garden
ishes, and, what is worse, the fields too languish, and the
d grass is burnt. These discriminations are not for-
is. But if they are providential, what do they import?
only answer, as a friend of mine once answered a ma-
atical question in the schools—"*Prorsùs nescio.*" Per-
it is, that men, who will not believe what they cannot
stand, may learn the folly of their conduct, while their
senses are made to witness against them; and themselves
e course of Providence become the subjects of a thousand
nsations they cannot explain. But the end is never an-
d. The lesson is inculcated indeed frequently enough,

but nobody learns it. Well. Instruction vouchsafed in vain is (I suppose) a debt to be accounted for hereafter. You must understand this to be a soliloquy. I wrote my thoughts without recollecting that I was writing a letter, and to you.

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 24, 1781.

THE letter you withheld so long, lest it should give me pain, gave me pleasure. Horace says, the poets are a waspish race; and from my own experience of the temper of two or three, with whom I was formerly connected, I can readily subscribe to the character he gives them. But for my own part, I have never yet felt that excessive irritability, which some writers discover, when a friend, in the words of Pope,

"Just hints a fault, or hesitates dislike."

Least of all would I give way to such an unseasonable ebullition, merely because a civil question is proposed to me with much gentleness, and by a man whose concern for my credit and character I verily believe to be sincere. I reply therefore, not peevishly, but with a sense of the kindness of your intentions, that I hope you may make yourself very easy on a subject, that I can perceive has occasioned you some solicitude. When I wrote the poem called *Truth*, by which is intended Religious Truth, it was indispensably necessary that I should set forth that doctrine which I know to be true, and that I should pass what I understood to be a just censure upon opinions and persuasions that differ from, or stand in direct opposition to it; because, though some errors may be innocent, and even religious errors are not always pernicious, yet in a case where the faith and hope of a Christian are concerned, they must necessarily be destructive; and because, neglecting this, I should have betrayed my subject; either suppressing what, in my judgement, is of the last importance, or giving countenance, by a timid silence, to the very evils it was my design to combat. That you may understand me better, I will subjoin—that I wrote that poem on purpose to inculcate the eleemosynary character of the Gospel, as a dispensation of mercy, in the most absolute sense of the word, to the exclusion of all claims of merit on the part of the receiver; consequently to set the brand of invalidity upon the plea of works, and to discover,

upon scriptural ground, the absurdity of that notion, which includes a solecism in the very terms of it, that man, by repentance and good works, may deserve the mercy of his Maker; I call it a solecism, because mercy deserved ceases to be mercy, and must take the name of justice. This is the opinion which I said, in my last, the world would not acquiesce in; but except this, I do not recollect that I have introduced a syllable into any of my pieces, that they can possibly object to; and even this I have endeavoured to deliver from doctrinal dryness, by as many pretty things, in the way of trinket and plaything, as I could muster upon the subject. So that if I have rubbed their gums, I have taken care to do it with a coral, and even that coral embellished by the ribband to which it is tied, and recommended by the tinkling of all the bells I could contrive to annex to it.

You need not trouble yourself to call on Johnson; being perfectly acquainted with the progress of the business, I am able to satisfy your curiosity myself. The post before the last I returned to him the second sheet of *Table Talk*, which he had sent me for correction, and which stands foremost in the volume. The delay has enabled me to add a piece of considerable length, which, but for the delay, would not have made its appearance upon this occasion; it answers to the name of Hope.

Your Independent gardener's excuses for his breach of the Sabbath are in my mind paltry, and all put together amount to no more than this,—that I choose to turn a penny when I can, and am determined that the sanctity of the day shall never interfere with a concern of so much greater importance. The barber and hair-dresser who officiates for me, would not wait upon the King himself on a Sunday, though he could easily make apologies more plausible than any adduced by the old man you mention, were he disposed to trespass against his duty and his conscience.

I remember a line in the Odyssey, which, literally translated, imports that there is nothing in the world more impudent than the belly. But had Homer met with an instance of modesty like yours, he would either have suppressed that observation, or at least have qualified it with an exception. I hope that, for the future, Mrs. Unwin will never suffer you to go to London, without putting some victuals in your pocket; for what

a strange article would it make in a newspaper, that a tall, well-dressed gentleman, by his appearance a clergyman, and with a purse of gold in his pocket, was found starved to death in the street! How would it puzzle conjecture, to account for such a phenomenon! Some would suppose that you had been kidnapped, like Betty Canning, of hungry memory; others would say, the gentleman was a Methodist, and had practised a rigorous self-denial, which had unhappily proved too hard for his constitution; but I will venture to say that nobody would divine the real cause, or suspect for a moment, that your modesty had occasioned the tragedy in question. By the way, is it not possible, that the spareness and slenderness of your person may be owing to the same cause? for surely it is reasonable to suspect, that the bashfulness which could prevail against you, on so trying an occasion, may be equally prevalent on others. I remember having been told by Colman, that when he once dined with Garrick, he repeatedly pressed him to eat more of a certain dish, that he was known to be particularly fond of; Colman as often refused, and at last declared he could not: "But could not you," says Garrick, "if you was in a dark closet by yourself?" The same question might perhaps be put to you, with as much, or more propriety; and therefore I recommend it to you, either to furnish yourself with a little more assurance, or always to eat in the dark.

We sympathize with Mrs. Unwin; and if it will be any comfort to her to know it, can assure her, that a lady in our neighbourhood is always, on such occasions, the most miserable of all things, and yet escapes with great facility through all the dangers of her state. Yours, *ut semper*, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 7, 1781.

MR. OLD brought us the acceptable news of your safe arrival. My sensations at your departure were far from pleasant, and Mrs. Unwin suffered more upon the occasion than when you first took leave of Olney. When we shall meet again, and in what circumstances, or whether we shall meet or not, is an article to be found no where but in that volume of Providence which belongs to the current year, and will not be understood till it is accomplished. This I know, that your visit was most agreeable here. It was so even to me, who, though I live in

ie midst of many agreeables, am but little sensible of their iarms. But when you came, I determined, as much as possible, to be deaf to the suggestions of despair; that if I could ontribute but little to the pleasure of the opportunity, I ight not dash it with unseasonable melancholy, and, like an strument with a broken string, interrupt the harmony of the oncert.

Lady Austen, waving all forms, has paid us the first visit; id not content with showing us that proof of her respect, ade handsome apologies for her intrusion. We returned the sit yesterday. She is a lively, agreeable woman; has seen uch of the world, and accounts it a great simpleton, as it is. ie laughs and makes laugh, and keeps up a conversation ithout seeming to labour at it.

I had rather submit to chastisement now, than be obliged undergo it hereafter. If Johnson, therefore, will mark ith a marginal Q, those lines that he or his object to as not ufficiently finished, I will willingly retouch them, or give a ason for my refusal. I shall moreover think myself obliged r any hints of that sort, as I do already to somebody, who, r running here and there two or three paragraphs into one, is very much improved the arrangement of my matter. I n apt, I know, to fritter it into too many pieces, and, by doing , to disturb that order to which all writings must owe their erspicuity, at least in a comsiderable measure. With all that rrefulness of revisal I have exercised upon the sheets as they ive been transmitted to me, I have been guilty of an overght, and have suffered a great fault to escape me, which I iall be glad to correct if not too late.

In the *Progress of Error*, a part of the Young Squire's pparatus, before he yet enters upon his travels, is said to be

> ——Memorandum-book to minute down
> The several posts, and where the chaise broke down.

ere, the reviewers would say, is not only "down" but "down erry down" into the bargain, the word being made to rhyme itself. This never occurred to me till last night, just as I as stepping into bed. I should be glad, however, to alter it ius—

> With memorandum-book for every town,
> And every inn, and where the chaise broke down.

have advanced *so far* in *Charity*, that I have ventured to

give Johnson notice of it, and his option whether he will print it now or hereafter. I rather wish he may choose the present time, because it will be a proper sequel to *Hope*, and because I am willing to think it will embellish the collection. Mrs Unwin proposes to send a couple of ducks by next Friday's diligence, when I imagine this last production will have a place in the basket.

Whoever means to take my phiz will find himself sorely perplexed in seeking for a fit occasion. That I shall not give him one is certain; and if he steals one, he must be as cunning and quick-sighted a thief as Autolycus himself. His best course will be to draw a face, and call it mine, at a venture. They who have not seen me these twenty years will say, It may possibly be a striking likeness now, though it bears no resemblance to what he was: time makes great alterations. They who know me better will say perhaps, Though it is not perfectly the thing, yet there is somewhat of the cast of his countenance. If the nose was a little longer, and the chin a little shorter, the eyes a little smaller, and the forehead a little more protuberant, it would be just the man. And thus, without seeing me at all, the artist may represent me to the public eye, with as much exactness as yours has bestowed upon you, though, I suppose, the original was full in his view when he made the attempt.

We are both as well as when you left us. Our hearty affections wait upon yourself and Mrs. Newton, not forgetting Euphrosyne, the laughing lady.

Yours, my dear Sir, W^M^. COWPER.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND, July 12, 1781.

I AM going to send, what when you have read, you may scratch your head, and say, I suppose, there's nobody knows, whether what I have got, be verse or not: by the tune and the time, it ought to be rhyme; but if it be, did you ever see, of late or of yore, such a ditty before? The thought did occur, to me and to her, as Madam and I, did walk and not fly, over hills and dales, with spreading sails, before it was dark, to Weston Park.

The news at *Oney* is little or noney, but such as it is, I send it, viz. Poor Mr. Peace cannot yet cease, addling his head *with* what you said, and has left parish-church quite in the *lurch*, having almost swore to go there no more.

ıge and his wife, that made such a strife, we met them
ı in Dog Lane; we gave them the wall, and that was all.
Mr. Scott, we have seen him not, except as he pass'd, in
nderful haste, to see a friend in Silver End. Mrs. Jones
oses, ere July closes, that she and her sister, and her Jones
er, and we that are here, our course shall steer to dine in
Spinney; but for a guinea, if the weather should hold, so
ınd so cold, we had better by far stay where we are. For
grass there grows, while nobody mows, (which is very
g,) so rank and long, that so to speak, 'tis at least a week,
happens to rain, ere it dries again.
ıave writ Charity, not for popularity, but as well as I could,
pes to do good; and if the Reviewer should say "to be
the gentleman's Muse, wears Methodist shoes; you may
r by her pace, and talk about grace, that she and her bard
little regard, for the taste and fashions, and ruling pas-
, and hoidening play, of the modern day; and though she
ne a borrowed plume, and now and then wear a tittering
tis only her plan, to catch if she can, the giddy and gay, as
go that way, by a production on a new construction. She
baited her trap in hopes to snap all that may come, with a
-plum."——His opinion in this, will not be amiss; 'tis
I intend, my principal end; and if I succeed, and folks
d read, till a few are brought to a serious thought, I shall
: I am paid, for all I have said, and all I have done, though
e run, many a time, after a rhyme, as far as from hence,
e end of my sense, and by hook or crook, write another
, if I live and am here, another year.
have heard before, of a room with a floor, laid upon
gs, and such like things, with so much art, in every part,
when you went in, you was forced to begin a minuet pace,
an air and a grace, swimming about, now in and now out,
a deal of state, in a figure of eight, without pipe or string,
y such thing; and now I have writ, in a rhyming fit, what
nake you dance, and as you advance, will keep you still,
gh against your will, dancing away, alert and gay, till you
to an end of what I have penn'd; which that you may do,
Madam and you are quite worn out with jigging about, I
my leave, and here you receive a bow profound, down to the
ıd, from your humble me— W. C.

S. When I concluded, doubtless you did think me right,

as well you might, in saying what I said of Scott; and then it was true, but now it is due, to him to note, that since I wrote, himself and he has visited we[1].

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 22, 1781.

I AM sensible of your difficulties in finding opportunities to write; and therefore, though always desirous and sometimes impatient to hear from you, am never peevish when I am disappointed. We thank you for the letters. The noble Divine is sensible though angry, and the Divine Captain always consistent with himself. What you relate of the unhappy Epsomite is truly shocking; when men cannot find the true remedy they often have recourse to one that is worse than the disease, and a worse than he has found, if the fact be such, it is not in the power of quackery to recommend. How wonderful! that a man can suppose himself employed under God's blessing as a discoverer of truth, while he himself is entangled in the worst of errors, a practical departure from it. If a traveller were lost in a labyrinth and in the course of his wanderings should stumble upon a vessel of intoxicating liquor, he could hardly do worse than drink it, or more effectually insure his own destruction.

Johnson having begun to print, has given me some sort of security for his perseverance; else, the tardiness of his operations would almost tempt me to despair of the end. He has, indeed, time enough before him; but that very circumstance is sometimes a snare, and gives occasion to delays that cannot be remedied. Witness the hare in the fable, who fell asleep in the midst of the race, and waked not till the tortoise had won the prize.

Taking it for granted that the new marriage-bill would pass, I took occasion, in the Address to Liberty, to celebrate the joyful æra; but in doing so afforded another proof that poets are not always prophets, for the House of Lords have thrown it out. I am, however, provided with four lines to fill up the gap, which I suppose it will be time enough to insert when the copy is sent down. I am in the middle of an affair called

[1] This letter was first printed entire in the Memoir of Cowper, prefixed to the edition of his poems among the Aldine Poets; the most judicious memoir and the best arranged edition that has yet appeared.

nversation, which, as *Table Talk* serves in the present volume way of introductory fiddle to the band that follows, I de- n shall perform the same office in a second.

Sic brevi fortes jaculamur ævo.

Our excursion to the Spinnie, which I mentioned in the hop my thumb lines I sent you, took place yesterday. The ather was just such as it would have been if we had had the rice of it; perhaps better; for of all things in the world we d it sometimes most difficult to please ourselves. We dined the root-house. Our great wheelbarrow, which may be led a first-rate in its kind, conveyed all our stores, and after- rds, with the assistance of a board laid over it, made us a y good table. We set off at one, and were at home again m after eight. I never made one in a party of pleasure that swered so well. We separated before we grew weary of each ner, which is a happiness seldom enjoyed upon such occa- ons; we were seven in company, including Hannah, who, ough highly delighted with her jaunt, was not at all more eased than her elders. She is as much delighted to-day with e acquisition of a sister born last night, but whether the rest that noble family will have equal cause to rejoice in the ent, is uncertain. Should she be followed by a troop, unless ey practise Dean Swift's recommended method for the main- nance of the poor, it is not easy to say where they will find ctuals, certainly not at Olney.

You cannot always find time to write, and I cannot always rite a great deal; not for want of time, but for want of mething equally requisite; perhaps materials, perhaps spirits, perhaps more frequently for want of ability to overcome an dolence that I have sometimes heard even you complain of.

I beg you will remember me to Mrs. Cowper. We are very rry to hear of Mrs. Newton's indisposition. Mr. Wright, who lled here three times before he could find me at home, in- rmed me, the day before yesterday, that poor Lord Dartmouth ows worse. His account of him is indeed a most unfavour- le one.

Thanks for the cocoa nuts and the slide. Mrs. Unwin joins ve to both. The summer being so far advanced,

She and her sublimity
Will do without dimity.

Yours, my dear Sir, and Mrs. Newton's, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 29, 1781.

HAVING given the case you laid before me in your last all due consideration, I proceed to answer it; and in order to clear my way, shall, in the first place, set down my sense of those passages in Scripture which, on a hasty perusal, seem to clash with the opinion I am going to give—"If a man smite one cheek, turn the other"—"If he take thy cloak, let him take thy coat also." That is, I suppose, rather than on a vindictive principle avail yourself of that remedy the law allows you, in the way of retaliation, for that was the subject immediately under the discussion of the speaker. Nothing is so contrary to the genius of the Gospel, as the gratification of resentment and revenge; but I cannot easily persuade myself to think, that the author of that dispensation could possibly advise his followers to consult their own peace at the expense of the peace of society, or inculcate a universal abstinence from the use of lawful remedies, to the encouragement of injury and oppression.

St. Paul again seems to condemn the practice of going to law, "Why do ye not rather suffer wrong?" &c. But if we look again, we shall find that a litigious temper had obtained, and was prevalent among the professors of the day. This he condemned, and with good reason; it was unseemly to the last degree, that the disciples of the Prince of Peace should worry and vex each other with injurious treatment, and unnecessary disputes, to the scandal of their religion in the eyes of the heathen. But surely he did not mean any more than his Master, in the place above alluded to, that the most harmless members of society should receive no advantage of its laws, or should be the only persons in the world who should derive no benefit from those institutions, without which society cannot subsist. Neither of them could mean to throw down the pale of property, and to lay the Christian part of the world open, throughout all ages, to the incursions of unlimited violence and wrong.

By this time you are sufficiently aware, that I think you have an indisputable right to recover at law what is so dishonestly withheld from you. The fellow, I suppose, has discernment enough to see a difference between you and the generality of the clergy, and cunning enough to conceive the purpose of turning your meekness and forbearance to good account, and

of coining them into hard cash, which he means to put in his pocket. But I would disappoint him, and show him, that though a Christian is not be quarrelsome, he is not to be crushed; and that though he is but a worm before God, he is not such a worm as every selfish unprincipled wretch may tread upon at his pleasure.

I lately heard a story from a lady, who has spent many years of her life in France, somewhat to the present purpose. An Abbé, universally esteemed for his piety, and especially for the meekness of his manners, had yet undesignedly given some offence to a shabby fellow in his parish. The man, concluding he might do as he pleased with so forgiving and gentle a character, struck him on one cheek, and bade him turn the other. The good man did so, and when he had received the two slaps, which he thought himself obliged to submit to, turned again, and beat him soundly. I do not wish to see you follow the French gentleman's example, but I believe nobody that has heard the story condemns him much for the spirit he showed upon the occasion.

I had the relation from Lady Austen, sister to Mrs. Jones, wife of the minister at Clifton. She is a most agreeable woman, and has fallen in love with your mother and me; insomuch, that I do not know but she may settle at Olney. Yesterday se'nnight we all dined together in the *Spinnie*—a most delightful retirement, belonging to Mrs. Throckmorton of Weston. Lady Austen's lackey, and a lad that waits on me in the garden, drove a wheelbarrow full of eatables and drinkables to the scene of our *Fête Champêtre*. A board laid over the top of the wheelbarrow served us for a table; our dining-room was a root-house lined with moss and ivy. At six o'clock, the servants, who had dined under a great elm upon the ground, at a little distance, boiled the kettle, and the said wheel-barrow served us for a tea-table. We then took a walk into the wilderness, about half a mile off, and were at home again a little after eight, having spent the day together from noon till evening without one cross occurrence, or the least weariness of each other. A happiness few parties of pleasure can boast of.

Yours, with our joint love, W. C.

TO MRS. NEWTON.

DEAR MADAM, Aug. 1781.

THOUGH *much obliged to* you for the favour of your last, and

ready enough to acknowledge the debt, the present, howe
not a day in which I should have chosen to pay it. A
tion of mind, which perhaps may be removed by to-m
rather disqualifies me for writing, a business I would
perform in good spirits, because melancholy is catching
cially where there is much sympathy to assist the cont
But certain poultry, which I understand are about to pa
respects to you, have advertised for an agreeable comp
and I find myself obliged to embrace the opportunity of
to town with them in that capacity.

I thank you for your little abridgment of my family's hi
Like every thing that relates to the present world, in
there seems to be nearly an equal mixture of the lame
and ridiculous, it affords both occasion to laugh and t
In this single instance of my uncle, I can see cause for
He trembles upon the verge of fourscore: a white hat
a yellow lining is no indication of wisdom suitable to so
an age; he can go but one step farther in the road of i
priety, and direct his executor to bury him in it. He is
little man, and had he lined his hat with pink instead of y
might have been gathered by a natural mistake for a
room, and sent off in a basket.

While the world lasts, fashion will continue to lead it l
nose. And, after all, what can fashion do for its most
quious followers? It can ring the changes upon the
things, and it can do no more. Whether our hats be wl
black, our caps high or low,—whether we wear two watc
one, is of little consequence. There is indeed an appe
of variety; but the folly and vanity that dictates and
the change, are invariably the same. When the fashio
particular period appear more reasonable than those of th
ceding, it is not because the world is grown more reas
than it was; but because, in a course of perpetual ch
some of them must sometimes happen to be for the l
Neither do I suppose the preposterous customs that pre
present, a proof of its greater folly. In a few years, p
next year, the fine gentleman will shut up his umbrell
give it to his sister, filling his hand with a crab-tree
instead of it: and when he has done so, will he be
than now? By no means. The love of change will ha
trayed him into a propriety, which, in reality, he has no

for, all his merit on the occasion amounting to no more than this—that, being weary of one plaything, he has taken up another.

In a note I received from Johnson last week, he expresses a wish that my pen may be still employed. Supposing it possible that he would yet be glad to swell the volume, I have given him an order to draw upon me for eight hundred lines, if he chooses it; *Conversation*, a piece which I think I mentioned in my last to Mr. Newton, being finished. If Johnson sends for it, I shall transcribe it as soon as I can, and transmit it to Charles Square. Mr. Newton will take the trouble to forward it to the press. It is not a dialogue, as the title would lead you to surmise; nor does it bear the least resemblance to *Table Talk*, except that it is serio-comic, like all the rest. My design in it is to convince the world that they make but an indifferent use of their tongues, considering the intention of Providence when he endued them with the faculty of speech; to point out the abuses, which is the jocular part of the business, and to prescribe the remedy, which is the grave and sober.

We felt ourselves not the less obliged to you for the cocoa-nuts, though they were good for nothing. They contained nothing but a putrid liquor, with a round white lump, which in taste and substance much resembled tallow, and was of the size of a small walnut. Nor am I the less indebted to your kindness for the fish, though none is yet come. Mrs. Unwin does not forget the eggs, but while the harvest continues puddings are in such request, that the farmers will not part with them.

Our joint love to both, and to Miss Catlett, if at home. Sir's letter, for which I thank him, shall have an answer as soon as possible. Yours, dear madam,

Most affectionately, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Aug. 16, 1781.

I MIGHT date my letter from the greenhouse, which we have converted into a summer parlour. The walls hung with garden mats, and the floor covered with a carpet, the sun too in a great measure excluded, by an awning of mats which forbids him to shine any where except upon the carpet, it affords us by far the pleasantest retreat in Olney. We eat, drink, and sleep, where

we always did; but here we spend all the rest of our tim
find that the sound of the wind in the trees, and the sing
birds, are much more agreeable to our ears than the inc
barking of dogs and screaming of children. Not to m
the exchange of a sweet smelling garden, for the putrid e
tions of Silver End. It is an observation that naturally
upon the occasion, and which many other occasions furn
opportunity to make, that people long for what they hav
and overlook the good in their possession. This is so t
the present instance, that for years past I should have th
myself happy to enjoy a retirement even less flattering
natural taste than this in which I am now writing; anc
often looked wistfully at a snug cottage, which, on acco
its situation at a distance from noise and disagreeable o
seemed to promise me all I could wish or expect, so far a
piness may be said to be local; never once adverting t
comfortable nook, which affords me all that could be fo
the most sequestered hermitage, with the advantage of
all those accommodations near at hand which no hermitage
possibly afford me. People imagine they should be happy
cumstances which they would find insupportably burthe
in less than a week. A man that has been clothed i
linen, and fared sumptuously every day, envies the p
under a thatched hovel; who, in return, envies him as
his palace and his pleasure-ground. Could they change
tions, the fine gentleman would find his ceilings were to
and that his casements admitted too much wind; that
no cellar for his wine, and no wine to put in his cellar.
with a thousand other mortifying deficiencies, would shat
romantic project into innumerable fragments in a mo
The clown, at the same time, would find the accession
much unwieldy treasure an incumbrance quite incom
with an hour's ease. His choice would be puzzled by v
He would drink to excess, because he would foresee no
his abundance; and he would eat himself sick for the
reason. He would have no idea of any other happiness
sensual gratification; would make himself a beast, and
his good fortune. The rich gentleman had, perhaps, or
have had, if he pleased, at the shortest notice, just such a
as this; but if he had it, he overlooked it, or, if he had
forgot that he might command it whenever he would.

rustic too, was actually in possession of some blessings, which he was a fool to relinquish, but which he could neither see nor feel, because he had the daily and constant use of them; such as good health, bodily strength, a head and a heart that never ached, and temperance, to the practice of which he was bound by necessity, that, humanly speaking, was a pledge and a security for the continuance of them all.

Thus I have sent you a schoolboy's theme. When I write to you, I do not write without thinking, but always without premeditation: the consequence is, that such thoughts as pass through my head when I am not writing, make the subject of my letters to you.

Johnson sent me lately a sort of apology for his printer's negligence, with his promise of greater diligence for the future. There was need enough of both. I have received but one sheet since you left us. Still, indeed, I see that there is time enough before us; but I see likewise that no length of time can be sufficient for the accomplishment of a work that does not go forward. I know not yet whether he will add *Conversation* to those poems already in his hands, nor do I care much. No man ever wrote such quantities of verse, as I have written this last year, with so much indifference about the event, or rather, with so little ambition of public praise. My pieces are such as may possibly be made useful. The more they are approved, the more likely they are to spread, and consequently to attain the end of usefulness; which, as I said once before, except my present amusement, is the only end I propose. And even in the pursuit of this purpose, commendable as it is in itself, I have not the spur I should once have had;—my labour must go unrewarded, and as Mr. Raban once said, I am raising a scaffold before a house that others are to live in, and not I.

I have left myself no room for politics, which I thought, when I began, would have been my principal theme.

Mr. Symonds's letters certainly are not here. Our servants never touch a paper without leave, and are so observant of our injunction in this particular, that unless I burn the covers of the news, they accumulate till they make a litter.

Yours, my dear Sir, W^M^. COWPER.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Aug. 21, 1781.

You wish you could employ your time to better purpose, yet

are never idle. In all that you say or do; whether you are alone, or pay visits, or receive them; whether you think or write, or walk or sit still; the state of your mind is such as discovers, even to yourself, in spite of all its wanderings, that there is a principle at bottom whose determined tendency is towards the best things. I do not at all doubt the truth of what you say, when you complain of that crowd of trifling thoughts that pesters you without ceasing; but then you always have a serious thought standing at the door of your imagination, like a justice of peace with the riot-act in his hand, ready to read it, and disperse the mob. Here lies the difference between you and me. My thoughts are clad in a sober livery, for the most part as grave as that of a bishop's servants. They turn too upon spiritual subjects, but the tallest fellow and the loudest among them all, is he who is continually crying with a loud voice, *Actum est de te; periisti!* You wish for more attention, I for less. Dissipation itself would be welcome to me, so it were not a vicious one; but however earnestly invited, is coy, and keeps at a distance. Yet with all this distressing gloom upon my mind, I experience, as you do, the slipperiness of the present hour, and the rapidity with which time escapes me. Every thing around us, and every thing that befalls us, constitutes a variety which, whether agreeable or otherwise, has still a thievish propensity, and steals from us days, months, and years, with such unparalleled address, that even while we say they are here, they are gone. From infancy to manhood is rather a tedious period, chiefly, I suppose, because at that time we act under the controul of others, and are not suffered to have a will of our own. But thence downward into the vale of years, is such a declivity, that we have just an opportunity to reflect upon the steepness of it, and then find ourselves at the bottom.

Here is a new scene opening, which, whether it perform what it promises or not, will add fresh plumes to the wings of time; at least while it continues to be a subject of contemplation. If the project take effect, a thousand varieties will attend the change it will make in our situation at Olney. If not, it will serve, however, to speculate and converse upon, and steal away many hours, by engaging our attention, before it be entirely dropped. Lady Austen, very desirous of retirement, especially of a retirement near her sister, an admirer of Mr. Scott as a *preacher*, and of your two humble servants now in the green-

house, as the most agreeable creatures in the world, is at present determined to settle here. That part of our great building which is at present occupied by Dick Coleman, his wife, child, and a thousand rats, is the corner of the world she chooses, above all others, as the place of her future residence. Next spring twelvemonth she begins to repair and beautify, and the following winter (by which time the lease of her house in town will determine) she intends to take possession. I am highly pleased with the plan, on Mrs. Unwin's account, who, since Mrs. Newton's departure, is destitute of all female connexion, and has not, in any emergency, a woman to speak to. Mrs. Scott is indeed in the neighbourhood, and an excellent person, but always engaged by a close attention to her family, and no more than ourselves a lover of visiting. But these things are all at present in the clouds. Two years must intervene, and in two years not only this project, but all the projects in Europe may be disconcerted.

Cocoa-nut naught,
Fish too dear,
None must be bought
For us that are here.

No lobster on earth,
That ever I saw,
To me would be worth
Sixpence a claw.

So, dear madam wait
Till fish can be got
At a reas'nable rate,
Whether lobster or not;

Till the French and the Dutch
Have quitted the seas,
And then send as much
And as oft as you please.

Yours, my dear Sir, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Aug. 25, 1781.

By Johnson's last note (for I have received a packet from him since I wrote last to you) I am ready to suspect that you have seen him, and endeavoured to quicken his proceedings. His assurance of greater expedition leads me to think so. I know little of booksellers and printers, but have heard from

others that they are the most dilatory of all people; otherwise, I am not in a hurry, nor would be so troublesome: but am obliged to you nevertheless for your interference, if his promised alacrity be owing to any spur that you have given him. He chooses to add *Conversation* to the rest, and says he will give me notice when he is ready for it; but I shall send it to *you* by the first opportune conveyance, and beg you to deliver it over to him. He wishes me not to be afraid of making the volume too large; by which expression I suppose he means, that if I had still another piece, there would be room for it. At present I have not, but am in the way to produce another, *faveat modò Musa*. I have already begun and proceeded a little way in a poem called *Retirement*. My view in choosing that subject is to direct to the proper use of the opportunities it affords for the cultivation of a man's best interests; to censure the vices and the follies which people carry with them into their retreats, where they make no other use of their leisure than to gratify themselves with the indulgence of their favourite appetites, and to pay themselves, by a life of pleasure, for a life of business. In conclusion, I would enlarge upon the happiness of that state, when discreetly enjoyed and religiously improved. But all this is, at present, in embryo. I generally despair of my progress when I begin; but if, like my travelling 'squire, I should kindle as I go, this likewise may make a part of the volume, for I have time enough before me.

Susan Roberts has been supposed dying for some time, was speechless for a week, then grew better, was seized with violent convulsions, and is again grown better. Mr. Scott is recovered, though when we paid him our last morning visit we found him a little disconcerted by the brutality and profaneness of a drunken fellow whom he had just been yoking with a pregnant lady. The church was filled with idle folks upon the occasion, who could not be persuaded to behave with any degree of decency or decorum, and the wretch himself was as insolent as ignorance and strong drink could make him.

I forgot to mention that Johnson uses the discretion my poetship has allowed him, with much discernment. He has suggested several alterations, or rather marked several defective passages, which I have corrected, much to the advantage of the poems. In the last sheet he sent me, he noted three such, all which I have reduced into better order. In the foregoing sheet, I

assented to his criticisms in some instances, and chose to abide by the original expression in others. Thus we jog on together comfortably enough; and perhaps it would be as well for authors in general, if their booksellers, when men of some taste, were allowed, though not to tinker the work themselves, yet to point out the flaws, and humbly to recommend an improvement.

The embargo I would have laid upon the present of fish reached you, I find, too late, and we are now to return our thanks for three pair of fine soles, on which we feasted noon and night: but I beg that said embargo may have its effect in future; and that Mrs. Newton will not think of sending more till the price is fallen. Once more love, thanks, and adieu! Yours, WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, August 25, 1781.

We rejoice with you sincerely in the birth of another son, and in the prospect you have of Mrs. Unwin's recovery; may your three children, and the next three, when they shall make their appearance, prove so many blessings to their parents, and make you wish that you had twice the number. But what made you expect daily that you should hear from me? Letter for letter is the law of all correspondence whatsoever, and because I wrote last, I have indulged myself for some time in expectation of a sheet from you. Not that I govern myself entirely by the punctilio of reciprocation, but having been pretty much occupied of late, I was not sorry to find myself at liberty to exercise my discretion, and furnished with a good excuse if I chose to be silent.

I expected, as you remember, to have been published last spring, and was disappointed. The delay has afforded me an opportunity to increase the quantity of my publication by about a third; and if my muse has not forsaken me, which I rather suspect to be the case, may possibly yet add to it. I have a subject in hand, which promises me a great abundance of poetical matter, by which, for want of a something I am not able to describe, I cannot at present proceed with. The name of it is "*Retirement*," and my purpose, to recommend the proper improvement of it, to set forth the requisites for that end, and to enlarge upon the happiness of that state of life,

when managed as it ought to be. In the course of my journey through this ample theme, I should wish to touch upon the characters, the deficiencies, and the mistakes of thousands, who enter on a scene of retirement, unqualified for it in every respect, and with such designs as have no tendency to promote either their own happiness or that of others. But as I have told you before, there are times when I am no more a poet than I am a mathematician; and when such a time occurs, I always think it better to give up the point, than to labour it in vain. I shall yet again be obliged to trouble you for franks; the addition of three thousand lines, or near that number, having occasioned a demand which I did not always foresee: but your obliging friend, and your obliging self, having allowed me the liberty of application, I make it without apology.

The solitude, or rather the duality of our condition at Olney, seems drawing to a conclusion. You have not forgot, perhaps, that the building we inhabit consists of two mansions. And because you have only seen the inside of that part of it which is in our occupation, I therefore inform you, that the other end of it is by far the most superb, as well as the most commodious. Lady Austen has seen it, has set her heart upon it, is going to fit it up and furnish it, and if she can get rid of the remaining two years of the lease of her London house, will probably enter upon it in a twelve-month. You will be pleased with this intelligence, because I have already told you, that she is a woman perfectly well bred, sensible, and in every respect agreeable; and above all, because she loves your mother dearly. It has in my eyes, (and I doubt not it will have the same in yours,) strong marks of providential interposition. A female friend, and one who bids fair to prove herself worthy of the appellation, comes, recommended by a variety of considerations, to such a place as Olney. Since Mr. Newton went, and till this lady came, there was not in the kingdom a retirement more absolutely such than ours. We did not want company, but when it came, we found it agreeable. A person that has seen much of the world, and understands it well, has high spirits, a lively fancy, and great readiness of conversation, introduces a sprightliness into such a scene as this, which, if it was peaceful before, is not the worse for being a little enlivened. In case of illness too, to which all are liable, it was *rather* a gloomy prospect, if we allowed ourselves to advert to

there was hardly a woman in the place from whom
l have been reasonable to have expected either comfort
tance. The present curate's wife is a valuable person,
a family of her own, and though a neighbour, is not a
ar one. But if this plan is effected we shall be in a
one family, and I suppose never pass a day without
ıtercourse with each other.

mother sends her warm affections, and welcomes into
ld the new-born William.

Yours, My dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

AR FRIEND, Sept. 9, 1781.

ıt willing to let the post set off without me, though I
thing material to put into his bag. I am writing in the
ıuse, where my myrtles, ranged before the windows,
ıe most agreeable blind imaginable; where I am undis-
by noise, and where I see none but pleasing objects.
ıation is as favourable to my purpose as I could wish;
state of my mind is not so, and the deficiencies I feel
'e not to be remedied by the stillness of my retirement,
ıeauty of the scene before me. I believe it is in part
o the excessive heat of the weather, that I find myself
ı at a loss when I attempt either verse or prose: my
spirits are depressed, and dulness is the consequence.
ılness, however, is all at your service; and the portion
ıt is necessary to fill up the present epistle, I send you
the least reluctance.

sorry to find that the censure I have passed upon Oc-
is even better founded than I supposed. Lady Austen
n at his sabbatical concerts, which it seems are com-
f song-tunes and psalm-tunes indiscriminately; music
words—and I suppose one may say, consequently,
devotion. On a certain occasion, when her niece was
ıt her side, she asked his opinion concerning the lawful-
such amusements as are to be found at Vauxhall or
;h; meaning only to draw from him a sentence of dis-
ıtion, that Miss Green might be the better reconciled to
raint under which she was held, when she found it war-
ɔy the judgement of so famous a divine. But she was
inted: he accounted them innocent, and recommended

them as useful. Curiosity, he said, was natural to young persons; and it was wrong to deny them a gratification which they might be indulged in with the greatest safety; because the denial being unreasonable, the desire of it would still subsist. It was but a walk, and a walk was as harmless in one place as another; with other arguments of a similar import, which might have proceeded with more grace, at least with less offence, from the lips of a sensual layman. He seems, together with others of our acquaintance, to have suffered considerably in his spiritual character by his attachment to music. The lawfulness of it, when used with moderation, and in its proper place, is unquestionable; but I believe that wine itself, though a man be guilty of habitual intoxication, does not more debauch and befool the natural understanding, than music, always music, music in season and out of season, weakens and destroys the spiritual discernment. If it is not used with an unfeigned reference to the worship of God, and with a design to assist the soul in the performance of it, which cannot be the case when it is the only occupation, it degenerates into a sensual delight, and becomes a most powerful advocate for the admission of other pleasures, grosser perhaps in degree, but in their kind the same.

Mr. Monk, though a simple, honest, good man—such, at least, he appears to us—is not likely to give general satisfaction. He preaches the truth, it seems, but not the whole truth; and a certain member of that church, who signed the letter of invitation, which was conceived in terms sufficiently encouraging, is likely to prove one of his most strenuous opposers. The little man, however, has an independent fortune, and has nothing to do but to trundle himself away to some other place, where he may find hearers, neither so nice nor so wise as we are at Olney. Yours, my dear Sir,

with our united love, W. C.

TO MRS. NEWTON. Sept. 16, 1781.

A NOBLE theme demands a noble verse,
In such I thank you for your fine oys*ters*.
The barrel was magnificently large,
But being sent to Olney at free charge,
Was not inserted in the driver's list,
And therefore overlook'd, forgot, or miss'd;

For when the messenger whom we dispatch'd
Enquired for oysters, Hob his noddle scratch'd,
Denying that his waggon or his wain
Did any such commodity contain.
In consequence of which, your welcome boon
Did not arrive till yesterday at noon;
In consequence of which some chanced to die,
And some though very sweet, were very dry.
Now Madam says, (and what she says must still
Deserve attention, say she what she will,)
That what we call the Diligence, be-case
It goes to London with a swifter pace,
Would better suit the carriage of your gift,
Returning downward with a pace as swift;
And therefore recommends it with this aim—
To save at least three days,—the price the same;
For though it will not carry or convey
For less than twelve pence, send whate'er you may,
For oysters bred upon the salt sea shore,
Pack'd in a barrel, they will charge no more.
News have I none that I can deign to write,
Save that it rain'd prodigiously last night;
And that ourselves were, at the seventh hour,
Caught in the first beginning of the shower;
But walking, running, and with much ado,
Got home—just time enough to be wet through.
Yet both are well, and wond'rous to be told,
Soused as we were, we yet have caught no cold;
And wishing just the same good hap to you,
We say, good Madam, and good Sir, Adieu!

TO MR. JOHNSON, BOOKSELLER.

SIR, Sept. 16, 1781.

r your not mentioning it, I suppose you have not yet received *onversation;* shall be glad to know it when you have. *Re-rement* is grown to about five hundred lines, so that I begin hope I shall reach the end of it.

"Cry aloud," &c.

Though the verse has rather an unusual run, I chose to gin it in that manner for the sake of animation, and am not le to alter it without flattening its energy quite away.

"Providence adverse," &c.

The reduplication of those words was a point I rather laboured for the sake of emphasis, and the transposition of them strikes me as artful, and as having an agreeable effect upon the ear.

"Cured of golden calves," &c.

The expression has a figurative boldness in it, which appears to me poetical.

All your other marks have been attended to, and I thank you for them.

I am, Sir,
Your most obedient, Wm. COWPER.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, The Greenhouse, Sept. 18, 1781.

I RETURN your preface, with many thanks for so affectionate an introduction to the public. I have observed nothing that in my judgement required alteration, except a single sentence in the first paragraph, which I have not obliterated, that you may restore it if you please, by obliterating my interlineation. My reason for proposing an amendment of it was, that your meaning did not strike me, which therefore I have endeavoured to make more obvious. The rest is what I would wish it to be. You say, indeed, more in my commendation, than I can modestly say of myself; but something will be allowed to the partiality of friendship, on so interesting an occasion.

I have no objection in the world to your conveying a copy to Dr. Johnson; though I well know that one of his pointed sarcasms, if he should happen to be displeased, would soon find its ways into all companies, and spoil the sale. He writes, indeed, like a man that thinks a great deal, and that sometimes thinks religiously: but report informs me that he has been severe enough in his animadversions upon Dr. Watts, who was nevertheless, if I am in any degree a judge of verse, a man of true poetical ability; careless, indeed, for the most part, and inattentive too often to those niceties which constitute elegance of expression, but frequently sublime in his conceptions, and masterly in his execution. Pope, I have heard, had placed him once in the Dunciad; but on being advised to read before he judged him, was convinced that he deserved other treatment, and thrust somebody's blockhead into the gap, whose name,

ting of a monosyllable, happened to fit it. Whatever however, I may be chargeable with as a poet, I cannot : myself of negligence. I never suffer a line to pass till : made it as good as I can; and though my doctrines ffend this king of critics, he will not, I flatter myself, gusted by slovenly inaccuracy, either in the numbers, s, or language. Let the rest take its chance. It is pos- ie may be pleased; and if he should, I shall have en- on my side one of the best trumpeters in the kingdom. m only speak as favourably of me as he has spoken of chard Blackmore (who, though he shines in his poem Creation, has written more absurdities in verse than any of our country), and my success will be secured.

ave often promised myself a laugh with you about your but have always forgotten it when I have been writing, : present I am not much in a laughing humour. You will re, however, for your comfort and the honour of that pipe, that it hardly falls within the line of my censure. ever fumigate the ladies, or force them out of company; o you use it as an incentive to hard drinking. Your s, indeed, have reason to complain that it frequently de- them of the pleasure of your own conversation while it you either into your study or your garden; but in all respects it is as innocent a pipe as can be. Smoke away, ore; and remember that if one poet has condemned the ce, a better than he (the witty and elegant Hawkins ie,) has been warm in the praise of it.

irement grows, but more slowly than any of its predeces- Time was when I could with ease produce fifty, sixty, or y lines in a morning: now, I generally fall short of thirty, m sometimes forced to be content with a dozen. It con- t present, I suppose, of between six and seven hundred; t there are hopes of an end, and I dare say Johnson will ie time enough to finish it.

I nothing add but this—that still *I am*
Your most affectionate and humble WILLIAM.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

DEAR FRIEND, Sept. 26, 1781.

I suppose, congratulate you on your safe arrival at Brigh- stone; and am the better pleased with your design to

close the summer there, because I am acquainted with th place, and, by the assistance of fancy, can without muc difficulty join myself to the party, and partake with you i your amusements and excursions. It happened singularl enough, that just before I received your last, in which yo apprize me of your intended journey, I had been writing upo the subject, having found occasion towards the close of m last poem, called *Retirement* to take some notice of the moder passion for sea-side entertainments, and to direct to the mean by which they might be made useful as well as agreeable. think with you, that the most magnificent object under heave is the great deep; and cannot but feel an unpolite species o astonishment, when I consider the multitudes that view it withou emotion, and even without reflection. In all its various forms, i is an object of all others the most suited to affect us with lastin impressions of the awful Power that created and controls it. am the less inclined to think this negligence excusable, because at a time of life when I gave as little attention to religious sub jects as almost any man, I yet remember that the waves woul preach to me, and that in the midst of dissipation I had a ear to hear them. One of Shakspeare's characters says,—"I am never merry when I hear sweet music." The same effec that harmony seems to have had upon him, I have experienced from the sight and sound of the ocean, which have often composed my thoughts into a melancholy not unpleasing, no without its use. So much for *Signor Nettuno*.

Lady Austen goes to London this day se'nnight. We have told her that you shall visit her; which is an enterprise you may engage in with the more alacrity, because as she loves every thing that has any connexion with your mother, she is sure to feel a sufficient partiality for her son. Add to this, that your own personal recommendations are by no means small, or such as a woman of her fine taste and discernment can possibly overlook. She has many features in her character which you will admire; but one, in particular, on account of the rarity of it, will engage your attention and esteem. She has a degree of gratitude in her composition, so quick a sense of obligation, as is hardly to be found in any rank of life, and, if report say true, is scarce indeed in the superior. Discover but a wish to please her, and she never forgets it; not only thanks you, but the tears will start into her eyes at the recollection of the

smallest service. With these fine feelings she has the most, and the most harmless vivacity you can imagine. In short, she is—what you will find her to be, upon half an hour's conversation with her; and when I hear you have a journey to town in contemplation, I will send you her address.

Your mother is well, and joins with me in wishing that you may spend your time agreeably upon the coast of Sussex.

Yours, W. C.

TO MR. JOHNSON, BOOKSELLER.

SIR, October 1, 1781.

I EXPECT to finish *Retirement* in a day or two, and as soon as transcribed I shall forward it to Mr. Newton. This addition, I think, will swell the volume to a respectable size, consisting, as I guess, of between seven and eight hundred lines. I may now grant myself a respite, and watch the success of the present undertaking, determining myself by the event, whether to resume my occupation as an author or drop it for ever.

I am, Sir, Your most obedient Servant, WM. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 3, 1781.

YOUR draft is worded for twenty pounds, and figured for twenty-one. I thought it more likely the mistake should be made in the figures than in the words, and have sent you a receipt accordingly. I am obliged to you for it, and no less bound to acknowledge your kindness in thinking for a man so little accustomed to think for himself. The result of my deliberations on the subject proposed is, that it will be better, on many accounts, to sell the chambers, and to deposit the money in the funds. Public credit wants a lift, and I would willingly shew my readiness to afford it one at so critical a juncture. If you can sell Morgan at the same time, so as to turn him to any account, you have my free leave to do it. It has been a dry summer, and frogs may possibly be scarce, and fetch a good price; though how his frogship has attained to the honour of that appellation, at this distance from the scene of his activity, I am not able to conjecture.

I hope you had a pleasant vacation, and have laid in a fresh stock of health and spirits for the business of the approaching winter. As for me, I have just finished my last piece called *Retirement*: which, as soon as it is fit to appear in public, shall,

together with all the rest of its fraternity, lay itself at your feet.

My affectionate respects attend Mrs. Hill and yourself.

Yours truly, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 4, 1781.

I GENERALLY write the day before the post, but yesterday had no opportunity, being obliged to employ myself in settling my greenhouse for the winter. I am now writing before breakfast, that I may avail myself of every inch of time for the purpose. N.B. An expression a critic would quarrel with, and call it by some hard name, signifying a jumble of ideas, and an unnatural match between time and space.

I am glad to be undeceived respecting the opinion I had been erroneously led into on the subject of Johnson's criticism on Watts. Nothing can be more judicious, or more characteristic of a distinguishing taste, than his observations upon that writer; though I think him a little mistaken in his notion, that divine subjects have never been poetically treated with success. A little more Christian knowledge and experience would perhaps enable him to discover excellent poetry, upon spiritual themes, in the aforesaid little Doctor. I perfectly acquiesce in the propriety of sending Johnson a copy of my productions; and I think it would be well to send it in our joint names, accompanied with a handsome card, such an one as you will know how to fabricate, and such as may predispose him to a favourable perusal of the book, by coaxing him into a good temper; for he is a great bear, with all his learning and penetration.

I forgot to tell you in my last, that I was well pleased with your proposed appearance in the title page under the name of the editor. I do not care under how many names you appear in a book that calls me its author. In my last piece, which I finished the day before yesterday, I have told the public that I live upon the banks of the Ouse: that public is a great simpleton if it does not know that you live in London; it will consequently know that I had need of the assistance of some friend in town, and that I could have recourse to nobody with more propriety than yourself. I shall transcribe and submit to your approbation as fast as possible. I have now, I

think, finished my volume: indeed I am almost weary of composing, having spent a year in doing nothing else. I reckon my volume will consist of about eight thousand lines. The season of dispatch which Johnson has so often promised is not yet arrived; a fortnight and sometimes three weeks elapse before I am supplied with a new sheet; the next brings us into the middle of Hope, which I account the middle of the volume, consequently, unless he proceeds with more celerity, the publishing moment will escape us this year, as it did the last: for his own sake, however, I should suppose he will catch it if he can, and be ready to exhibit by the meeting of Parliament after the Christmas recess.

Mrs. Unwin is well, and sends her love. Our thanks are due for a fine piece of skait and some prawns, both as fresh as when they took leave of their native element. We heartily wish Mrs. Newton better than *pretty* well, and the recovery of all the invalids in your family. Yours, my dear friend,

W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, October 6, 1781.

WHAT a world are you daily conversant with, which I have not seen these twenty years, and shall never see again! The arts of dissipation (I suppose) are no where practised with more refinement or success than at the place of your present residence. By your account of it, it seems to be just what it was when I visited it, a scene of idleness and luxury, music, dancing, cards, walking, riding, bathing, eating, drinking, coffee, tea, scandal, dressing, yawning, sleeping; the rooms perhaps more magnificent, because the proprietors are grown richer, but the manners and occupations of the company just the same. Though my life has long been like that of a recluse, I have not the temper of one, nor am I in the least an enemy to cheerfulness and good humour; but I cannot envy you your situation; I even feel myself constrained to prefer the silence of this nook, and the snug fireside in our own diminutive parlour, to all the splendour and gaiety of Brighton.

You ask me, how I feel on the occasion of my approaching publication. Perfectly at my ease. If I had not been pretty well assured before hand that my tranquillity would be but little endangered by such a measure, I would never have engaged in it; for I cannot bear disturbance. I have had in view

two principal objects; first, to amuse myself,—and secondly, to compass that point in such a manner, that others might possibly be the better for my amusement. If I have succeeded, it will give me pleasure; but if I have failed, I shall not be mortified to the degree that might perhaps be expected. I remember an old adage, (though not where it is to be found,) "*bene vixit, qui bene latuit,*" and if I had recollected it at the right time, it should have been the motto to my book. By the way, it will make an excellent one for Retirement, if you can but tell me whom to quote for it. The critics cannot deprive me of the pleasure I have in reflecting, that so far as my leisure has been employed in writing for the public, it has been conscientiously employed, and with a view to their advantage. There is nothing agreeable, to be sure, in being chronicled for a dunce; but I believe there lives not a man upon earth who would be less affected by it than myself. With all this indifference to fame, which you know me too well to suppose me capable of affecting, I have taken the utmost pains to deserve it. This may appear a mystery or a paradox in practice, but it is true. I considered that the taste of the day is refined, and delicate to excess, and that to disgust the delicacy of taste, by a slovenly inattention to it, would be to forfeit at once all hope of being useful; and for this reason, though I have written more verse this last year than perhaps any man in England, I have finished, and polished, and touched, and retouched, with the utmost care. If after all I should be converted into waste paper, it may be my misfortune, but it will not be my fault. I shall bear it with the most perfect serenity.

I do not mean to give ——— a copy: he is a good-natured little man, and crows exactly like a cock, but knows no more of verse than the cock he imitates.

Whoever supposes that Lady Austen's fortune is precarious, is mistaken. I can assure you, upon the ground of the most circumstantial and authentic information, that it is both genteel and perfectly safe. Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 14, 1781.

I WOULD not willingly deprive you of any comfort, and therefore would wish you to comfort yourself as much as you can with a notion that you are a more bountiful correspondent than

I. You will give me leave in the mean time, however, to assert to myself a share in the same species of consolation, and to enjoy the flattering recollection that I have sometimes written three letters to your one. I never knew a poet, except myself, who was punctual in any thing, or to be depended on for the due discharge of any duty, except what he thought he owed to the Muses. The moment a man takes it into his foolish head that he has what the world calls Genius, he gives himself a discharge from the servile drudgery of all friendly offices, and becomes good for nothing, except in the pursuit of his favourite employment. But I am not yet vain enough to think myself entitled to such self-conferred honours, and though I have sent much poetry to the press, or, at least, what I hope my readers will account such, am still as desirous as ever of a place in your heart, and to take all opportunities to convince you that you have still the same in mine. My attention to my poetical function has, I confess, a little interfered of late with my other employments, and occasioned my writing less frequently than I should have otherwise done. But it is over, at least for the present, and I think for some time to come. I have transcribed *Retirement*, and send it. You will be so good as to forward it to Johnson, who will forward it, I suppose, to the public, in his own time; but not very speedily, moving as he does. The post brought me a sheet this afternoon, but we have not yet reached the end of *Hope*.

Mr. Scott, I perceive by yours to him, has mentioned one of his troubles, but I believe not the principal one. The question, whether he shall have an assistant at the great house in Mr. G. Raban, is still a question, or, at least, a subject of discontent, between Mr. Scott and the people. In a *tête-à-tête* I had with this candidate for the chair, in the course of the last week, I told him my thoughts upon the subject plainly; advised him to change places, by the help of fancy, with Mr. Scott, for a moment, and to ask himself how *he* would like a self-intruded deputy; advised him likewise by no means to address Mr. Scott any more upon the matter, for that he might be sure he would never consent to it; and concluded with telling him, that if he persisted in his purpose of speaking to the people, the probable consequence would be, that sooner or later, Mr. Scott would be forced out of the parish, and the blame of his expulsion would all light upon him. He heard,

approved and, I think the very next day, put all my good counsel to shame, at least a considerable part of it, by applying to Mr. Scott, in company with Mr. Perry, for his permission to speak at the Sunday evening lecture. Mr. Scott, as I had foretold, was immoveable; but offered, for the satisfaction of his hearers, to preach three times to them on the Sabbath, which he could have done, Mr. Jones having kindly offered, though without their knowledge, to officiate for him at Weston. Mr. Raban answered, "That will not do, Sir; it is not what the people wish; they want variety." Mr. Scott replied very wisely, "If they do, they must be content without it; it is not my duty to indulge that humour." This is the last intelligence I have had upon the subject. I received it not from Mr. Scott, but from an ear-witness.

I did not suspect, till the Reviewers told me so, that you are made up of artifice and design, and that your ambition is to delude your hearers. Well—I suppose they please themselves with the thought of having mortified you; but how much are they mistaken! They shot at you, and their arrow struck the Bible, recoiling, of course, upon themselves. My turn will come, for I think I shall hardly escape a threshing.

Yours, my dear Sir,
and Mrs. Newton's, WM. COWPER.

TO MRS. COWPER.

MY DEAR COUSIN, Oct. 19, 1781.

YOUR fear lest I should think you unworthy of my correspondence, on account of your delay to answer, may change sides now, and more properly belongs to me. It is long since I received your last, and yet I believe I can say truly, that not a post has gone by me since the receipt of it that has not reminded me of the debt I owe you, for your obliging and unreserved communications both in prose and verse, especially for the latter, because I consider them as marks of your peculiar confidence. The truth is, I have been such a verse-maker myself, and so busy in preparing a volume for the press, which I imagine will make its appearance in the course of the winter, that I hardly had leisure to listen to the calls of any other engagement. It is however finished, and gone to the printer's, and I have nothing now to do with it, but to correct the sheets as they are sent to me, and consign it over to

the judgement of the public. It is a bold undertaking at this time of day, when so many writers of the greatest abilities have gone before, who seem to have anticipated every valuable subject, as well as all the graces of poetical embellishment, to step forth into the world in the character of a bard, especially when it is considered, that luxury, idleness, and vice, have debauched the public taste, and that nothing hardly is welcome but childish fiction, or what has at least a tendency to excite a laugh. I thought, however, that I had stumbled upon some subjects, that had never before been poetically treated, and upon some others, to which I imagined it would not be difficult to give an air of novelty by the manner of treating them. My sole drift is to be useful; a point which however I knew I should in vain aim at, unless I could be likewise entertaining. I have therefore fixed these two strings upon my bow, and by the help of both have done my best to send my arrow to the mark. My readers will hardly have begun to laugh, before they will be called upon to correct that levity, and peruse me with a more serious air. As to the effect, I leave it alone in His hands, who can alone produce it: neither prose nor verse can reform the manners of a dissolute age, much less can they inspire a sense of religious obligation, unless assisted and made efficacious by the power who superintends the truth he has vouchsafed to impart.

You made my heart ache with a sympathetic sorrow, when you described the state of your mind on occasion of your late visit into Hertfordshire. Had I been previously informed of your journey before you made it, I should have been able to have foretold all your feelings with the most unerring certainty of prediction. You will never cease to feel upon that subject; but with your principles of resignation, and acquiescence in the divine will, you will always feel as becomes a Christian. We are forbidden to murmur, but we are not forbidden to regret; and whom we loved tenderly while living we may still pursue with an affectionate remembrance, without having any occasion to charge ourselves with rebellion against the sovereignty that appointed a separation. A day is coming when I am confident you will see and know, that mercy to both parties was the principal agent in a scene, the recollection of which is still painful. W. C.

TO MR. JOHNSON, BOOKSELLER.

SIR, Olney, Oct. 20, 1781.

I ACKNOWLEDGE with pleasure the accuracy of your remark on the two lines you have scored in the first page of the inclosed sheet; but though the word *there* in its critical and proper use is undoubtedly an adverb denoting locality, yet I cannot but think that in the familiar strain of poetical colloquy (especially if the gay careless air of the speaker in the present instance be considered) a less exact application of it may be allowed. We say in common speech—you was scrupulous on that occasion; *there* I think you was wrong,—meaning in that part of your conduct. I do not know indeed that I should hesitate to give it that sense, if I were writing prose for the press instead of verse, or on any other occasion whatsoever.

The unexpected arrival of the inclosed so soon after the foregoing sheet has inspired me with hopes that your printer is about to proceed with the alacrity he promised so long since. It proves, however, that he is capable of great dispatch when he is pleased to use it.

I am Sir,
Your most obedient Servant, W^M^. COWPER.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 22, 1781.

MR. BATES, without intending it, has passed a severer censure upon the modern world of readers, than any that can be found in my volume. If they are so merrily disposed, in the midst of a thousand calamities, that they will not deign to read a preface of three or four pages, because the purport of it is serious, they are far gone indeed, and in the last stage of a phrenzy, such as I suppose has prevailed in all nations that have been exemplarily punished, just before the infliction of the sentence. But though he lives in the world he has so ill an opinion of, and ought therefore to know it better than I, who have no intercourse with it at all, I am willing to hope that he may be mistaken. Curiosity is an universal passion. There are few people who think a book worth their reading, but feel a desire to know something about the writer of it. This desire will naturally lead them to peep into the preface, where they will soon find that a little perseverance will furnish them with some in-

formation on the subject. If, therefore, your preface finds no readers, I shall take it for granted that it is because the book itself is accounted not worth their notice. Be that as it may, it is quite sufficient that I have played the antic myself for their diversion; and that, in a state of dejection such as they are absolute strangers to, I have sometimes put on an air of cheerfulness and vivacity, to which I am myself in reality a stranger, for the sake of winning their attention to more useful matter. I cannot endure the thought for a moment, that you should descend to my level on the occasion, and court their favour in a style not more unsuitable to your function, than to the constant and consistent strain of your whole character and conduct. No—let the preface stand. I cannot mend it. I could easily make a jest of it, but it is better as it is.

By the way—will it not be proper, as you have taken some notice of the modish dress I wear in *Table-Talk*, to include *Conversation* in the same description, which is (the first half of it, at least,) the most airy of the two? They will otherwise think, perhaps, that the observation might as well have been spared entirely; though I should have been sorry if it had, for when I am jocular I do violence to myself, and am therefore pleased with your telling them, in a civil way, that I play the fool to amuse them, not because I am one myself, but because I have a foolish world to deal with.

I am inclined to think that Mr. Scott will no more be troubled by Mr. Raban, with applications of the sort I mentioned in my last. Mr. Scott, since I wrote that account, has related to us, himself, what passed in the course of their interview; and, it seems, the discourse ended with his positive assurance, that he never would consent to the measure, though at the same time, he declared he would never interrupt or attempt to suppress it. To which Mr. Raban replied, that unless he had his free consent, he should never engage in the office. It is to be hoped, therefore, that, in time, that part of the people, who may at present be displeased with Mr. Scott, for withholding his consent, will grow cool upon the subject, and be satisfied with receiving their instruction from their proper minister.

I beg you will, on no future occasion, leave a blank for Mrs. Newton, unless you have first engaged her promise to fill it: for thus we lose the pleasure of your company, without being

indemnified for the loss, by the acquisition of hers. Johnson sent me two sheets in the course of the last ten days, to my great astonishment. I complimented him upon his alacrity in hopes that encouragement might ensure the continuance of it. The next sheet will bring the beginning of *Charity*. Our love to you both. Yours, my dear friend, W^M^. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, Nov. 5, 1781.

I GIVE you joy of your safe return from the lips of the great deep. You did not indeed discern many signs of sobriety, or true wisdom, among the people of Brighthelmstone, but it is not possible to observe the manners of a multitude, of whatever rank, without learning something; I mean, if a man has a mind like yours, capable of reflection. If he sees nothing to imitate, he is sure to see something to avoid; if nothing to congratulate his fellow creatures upon, at least much to excite his compassion. There is not, I think, so melancholy a sight in the world,—(an hospital is not to be compared with it,—) as that of a thousand persons distinguished by the name of gentry, who, gentle perhaps by nature, and made more gentle by education, have the appearance of being innocent and inoffensive, yet being destitute of all religion, or not at all governed by the religion they profess, are none of them at any great distance from an eternal state, where self-deception will be impossible, and where amusements cannot enter. Some of them, we may say, will be reclaimed;—it is most probable indeed that some of them will, because mercy, if one may be allowed the expression, is fond of distinguishing itself by seeking its objects among the most desperate cases; but the Scripture gives no encouragement to the warmest charity to hope for deliverance for them all. When I see an afflicted and an unhappy man, I say to myself, there is perhaps a man whom the world would envy, if they knew the value of his sorrows, which are possibly intended only to soften his heart, and to turn his affections toward their proper centre. But when I see or hear of a crowd of voluptuaries, who have no ears but for music, no eyes but for splendour, and no tongue but for impertinence and folly,—I say, or at least I see occasion to say —This is madness!—This persisted in must have a tragical *conclusion*.—It will condemn you, not only as Christians un-

worthy of the name but as intelligent creatures.—You know by the light of nature, if you have not quenched it, that there is a God, and that a life like yours cannot be according to his will.

I ask no pardon of you for the gravity and gloominess of these reflections, which I stumbled on when I least expected it; though, to say the truth, these or others of a like complexion are sure to occur to me, when I think of a scene of public diversion like that you have lately left.

I remember Mr. —— well; a man famous for nothing but idling away his time at the coffee-house, and bathing upon the open beach without the decent use of a machine. I may say upon the surest ground, that the world to which he conforms despises him for doing so; because I remember well that I and my party, who had not a grain of religion amongst us, always mentioned him with disdain; his charitable profanation of the sabbath will never earn him any other wages.

I am inclined to hope that Johnson told you the truth, when he said he should publish me soon after Christmas. His press has been rather more punctual in its remittances than it used to be; we have now but little more than two of the longest pieces, and the small ones that are to follow, by way of epilogue, to print off, and then the affair is finished. But once more I am obliged to gape for franks; only these, which I hope will be the last I shall want, at yours and Mr. Smith's convenient leisure.

We rejoice that you have so much reason to be satisfied with John's proficiency. The more spirit he has the better, if his spirit be but manageable, and put under such management as your prudence and Mrs. Unwin's will suggest. I need not guard you against severity, of which I conclude there is no need, and which I am sure you are not at all inclined to practise without it; but perhaps if I was to whisper, "beware of too much indulgence!"—I should only give a hint that the fondness of a father for a fine boy might seem to justify. I have no particular reason for the caution, at this distance it is not possible that I should, but in a case like yours an admonition of that sort seldom wants propriety.

Your mother has been considerably indisposed with a sore throat and feverish complaint, but is well again, except that her strength, which is never that of an Amazon, is not quite re-

stored. Her love attends you and your family, and mine goes with it.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 7, 1781.

So far as Johnson is to be depended on, and I begin to hope that he is now in earnest, I think myself warranted to furnish you with an answer to the question which you say so often meets you. Mr. Unwin made the same enquiry at his shop in his way to Stock from Brighthelmstone, when he assured him that the book would be printed off in a month, and ready for publication after the holidays. For some time past the business has proceeded glibly, and if he perseveres at the same rate, it is probable his answer will prove a true one.

Having discontinued the practice of verse-making for some weeks, I now feel quite incapable of resuming it; and can only wonder at it, as one of the most extraordinary incidents in my life, that I should have composed a volume. Had it been suggested to me as a practicable thing, in better days, though I should have been glad to have found it so, many hindrances would have conspired to withhold me from such an enterprise. I should not have dared, at that time of day, to have committed my name to the public, and my reputation to the hazard of their opinion. But it is otherwise with me now. I am more indifferent about what may touch me in that point, than ever I was in my life. The stake that would then have seemed important, now seems trivial; and it is of little consequence to me, who no longer feel myself possessed of what I accounted infinitely more valuable, whether the world's verdict shall pronounce me a poet, or an empty pretender to the title. This happy coldness towards a matter so generally interesting to all rhymers, left me quite at liberty for the undertaking, unfettered by fear, and under no restraints of that diffidence, which is my natural temper, and which would either have made it impossible for me to commence an author by name, or would have insured my miscarriage if I had. In my last dispatches to Johnson, I sent him a new edition of the title-page, having discarded the Latin paradox which stood at the head of the former, and added a French motto to that from Virgil. It is taken from a volume of the excellent Caraccioli, called *Jouis-*

sance de soi-même, and strikes me as peculiarly apposite to my purpose.

Mr. Bull is an honest man. We have seen him twice since he received your orders to march hither, and faithfully told us it was in consequence of those orders that he came. He dined with us yesterday; we were all in pretty good spirits, and the day passed very agreeably. It is not long since he called on Mr. Scott. Mr. Raban came in. Mr. Bull began, addressing himself to the former, My friend, you are in trouble you are unhappy; I read it in your countenance. Mr. Scott replied, he had been so, but he was better. Come then, says Mr. Bull, I will expound to you the cause of all your anxiety. You are too common; you make yourself cheap. Visit your people less, and converse more with your own heart. How often do you speak to them in the week?—"Thrice."—Ay, there it is! Your sermons are an old ballad; your prayers are an old ballad; and you are an old ballad too.—"I would wish to tread in the steps of Mr. Newton."—You do well to follow his steps in all other instances; but in this instance you are wrong; and so was he. Mr. Newton trod a path which no man but himself could have used so long as he did, and he wore it out long before he went from Olney. Too much familiarity and condescension cost him the estimation of his people. He thought he should insure their love, to which he had the best possible title, and by those very means he lost it. Be wise, my friend; take warning; make yourself scarce, if you wish that persons of little understanding should know how to prize you.

When he related to us this harangue, so nicely adjusted to the case of the third person present, it did us both good, and as Jacques says,

"It made my lungs to crow like chanticleer."

Mrs. Unwin wishes me to inform you, that the character of Thomas —— is no longer a doubtful one at Olney. He is much addicted to public-houses, and every body knows it. Geary Ball led him home drunk from one of them not long since, where he had been playing at quoits, and regaling himself with drink till he was unable to stand unsupported. She thought it the part of a friend to communicate to you this piece of intelligence, that you may not lend him money and lose it. He used

frequently to borrow of us, but we intend henceforth to discontinue our aids of that sort.

I have only seen Mr. Jones since I received your last, and have had no opportunity to mention to him your enquiry. He was alive, yesterday, however, and not long since spoke of an intended journey to London.

We wish your letter to your parishioners may have the best effects, and shall be glad to read it. Many thanks for three couple of mackerel, perfectly fresh. Our love of you both, though often sent to London, is still with us. If it is not an inexhaustible well, (there is but one love that can, with propriety, be called so,) it is, however, a very deep one, and not likely to fail while we are living.

Yours, my dear sir, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 19, 1781.

I REALLY think your apprehensions for Mr. Madan are but too well founded. I should be more concerned than surprised to find them verified. Sanguine and confident as he has been, his mortification will be extreme when he finds that what he took for *terra firma*, was a mere vapour hanging in the horizon, in pursuit of which he has run his vessel upon shoals that must prove fatal to her. Discoverers of truth are generally sober, modest, and humble; and if their discoveries are less valued by mankind than they deserve to be, can bear the disappointment with patience and equality of temper. But hasty reasoners and confident asserters are generally wedded to an hypothesis, and transported with joy at their fancied acquisitions, are impatient under contradiction, and grow wild at the thoughts of a refutation. Never was an air-built castle more completely demolished than his is likely to be; I wish with you that he may be able to sustain the shock, but am at a loss to conceive how he should do it. After awakening the attention of mankind, and calling the world around him to listen to his Ἐυρήκα, after having distressed the serious, and excited the curiosity, (perhaps the appetite,) of the giddy and unthinking, to find himself baffled with so much ease, and refuted with such convincing perspicuity on the part of his opponent, must give a terrible blow to every passion that engaged him in the task, and that was soothed and gratified to the utmost by his fancied

success in it. This may, (and every considerate person will wish it may,) dispose him to a serious recollection and examination of his past conduct, and work in him a reform more valuable to him than the possession of all Solomon's wives would be, or even the establishment of polygamy by law. Surely the poor lunatic who uses his blanket for a robe, and imagines that a few straws struck whimsically through his hair are a royal diadem, is not more to be pitied, perhaps less, than the profound reasoner who turns over shelves of folios with infinite industry and toil, and at the end of all his labour finds that he has grasped a shadow, and made himself a jest to the bystander.

I shall be obliged to you if, when you have had an opportunity to learn, you will let me know how he bears the brunt, whether he hardens himself against conviction, which in this case is scarcely possible, whether he repents of what is past, or whether he is quite overwhelmed by regret and fruitless sorrow.

You do me an honour I little deserve when you ask my opinion upon any occasion, and speak of being determined by it. Such as it is, however, it is always at your service, and would be if it were better worth your having.—The dictates of compassion and humanity prompt you to interpose your good offices in order to prevent the publication with which this unhappy man is threatened by Mr. Haweis. They are advisers you may safely listen to, and deserve the more attention on the present occasion, as you are perhaps the only man in the world to whom such a design has been suggested, and who would know how to manage the execution of it with sufficient delicacy and discretion. The book and the author are distinct subjects, and will be for ever accounted such by all reasonable persons. The author, indeed, may suffer by the follies of the book, but the latter ought not to be judged by the character of the writer. If it were otherwise, yet in this case there can be no need of Mr. Haweis, the point in dispute being already tried, and Mr. Madan's arguments condemned at the bar of the public. Mr. Haweis will hurt himself more by one such ungenerous proceeding, than he can possibly hurt Mr. Madan by divulging, if he can do it, a thousand irregularities in his conduct. Sensual and lawless gratifications are odious enough, especially in a minister; but double detestation attends the man who, to gratify a *present enmity*, avails himself of secrets he could never

have had possession of, had he not once professed himself a friend. If it should happen too that Mr. Madan's intellects should be swept away by such a deluge of obloquy and detraction, following close upon his present disappointment, (an event not at all improbable,) Mr. Haweis will have reason to wish that he had taken his life rather than destroyed his character. He thinks perhaps the interest of the cause demands it of him; but when was the cause promoted by a discovery of the vices or follies of its advocates and professors? On the whole, therefore, if I must advise, I would advise to write.

I believe I returned Mrs. Newton thanks for the cocoa nuts as soon as we received them, but have now a fresh occasion to thank her, Mrs. Unwin having received much benefit from them, and found her health improved ever since she began to eat them.

Our controversies here are at a stand for the present. Mr. Raban has not yet received the citation with which Mr. Page threatened him, and the Warringtonians are contented not to push forward in the business of the pew till they have seen Mr. Wright, who is expected here on Tuesday.—Mr. Page is very thinly attended; Weston and Clifton and the meetings drink up all his congregation. There were but fifteen to wait upon his last Thursday's lecture;—the blessed effect of quarrelling about straws, when he might have had peace with every body if he had not gone out of his way to seek contention. His hearers, however, complain of great inconsistency in his preaching, and some of his warmest partisans, and whose attachment to him has lasted the longest, begin to be disgusted.

Many thanks for two pair of remarkably fine soles, with shrimps; they were here in sixteen hours after they set out from London, and came very opportunely for me, who, having a violent cold, could hardly have eaten any thing else.

Mrs. Unwin intended to have sent a couple of fowls, but being taken out of the coop, one of them appeared to be distempered, and two others, on examination, in the same predicament; one so bad that we were obliged to throw it away, and the other we gave away, not thinking it eatable except by those whose stomachs were less nice than our own. It is, I suppose, an epipoultrical malady.

You told me Mrs. Newton intended to have sent me a long story about the fish. With both my two eyes, assisted by my

two glasses, I could make neither more nor less of it than a long song, and so I read the passage to Mrs. Unwin once and again. I should have felt more than ordinary concern for the business that prevented her, and have endeavoured by all means to persuade her to resume her intention and to send me this song immediately, if Mrs. Unwin had not some time after discovered, with more sagacity than I happened to have in exercise, that, what I took for a song was only a story, the insignificant letter *t* being omitted, and the *ry* having assumed the appearance on this occasion of their near relations *ng*.

Mrs. Unwin would have attempted to write, but I dissuaded her from it, because even when she is pretty well she finds it hurtful.

You will believe us both, as ever,
Your obliged and affectionate friends and servants,
WM. AND M—.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 24, 1781.

NEWS is always acceptable, especially from another world. I cannot tell you what has been done in the Chesapeake, but I can tell you what has passed at West Wycombe, in this county. Do you feel yourself disposed to give credit to the story of an apparition? No, say you. I am of your mind. I do not believe more than one in a hundred of those tales with which old women frighten children, and teach children to frighten each other. But you are not such a philosopher, I suppose, as to have persuaded yourself that an apparition is an impossible thing. You can attend to a story of that sort, if well authenticated? Yes. Then I can tell you one.

You have heard, no doubt, of the romantic friendship that subsisted once between Paul Whitehead and Lord le Despenser, the late Sir Francis Dashwood.—When Paul died, he left his lordship a legacy. It was his heart, which was taken out of his body, and sent as directed. His friend having built a church, and at that time just finished it, used it as a mausoleum upon this occasion; and having (as I think the newspapers told us at the time) erected an elegant pillar in the centre of it, on the summit of this pillar, enclosed in a golden urn, he placed the heart in question. But not as a lady places a china figure upon her mantel-tree, or on the top of her cabinet, but with much respectful ceremony, and all the forms of funeral solemnity. He

hired the best singers and best performers. He composed an anthem for the purpose, he invited all the nobility and gentry in the country to assist at the celebration of these obsequies, and having formed them all into an august procession, marched to the place appointed at their head, and consigned the posthumous treasure, with his own hands, to its state of honourable elevation. Having thus, as he thought, (and as he might well think, for it seems they were both renowned for their infidelity, and if they had any religion at all were pagans,) appeased the manes of the deceased, he rested satisfied with what he had done, and supposed his friend would rest. But not so;—about a week since, I received a letter from a person, who cannot have been misinformed, telling me that Paul has appeared frequently of late to his Lordship, who labours under a complication of distempers,—that it is supposed the shock he has suffered from such unexpected visits will make his recovery, which was before improbable, impossible. Nor is this all: to ascertain the fact, and to put it out of the power of scepticism to argue away the reality of it, there are few, if any, of his lordship's numerous household, who have not likewise seen him, sometimes in the park, sometimes in the garden, as well as in the house, by day and by night, indifferently. I make no reflections upon this incident, having other things to write about, and but little room.

I am much indebted to Mr. Smith for more franks, and still more obliged by the handsome note with which he accompanied them. He has furnished me sufficiently for the present occasion, and by his readiness, and obliging manner of doing it, encouraged me to have recourse to him, in case another exigence of the same kind should offer. A French author I was reading last night says, He that has written, will write again. If the critics do not set their foot upon this first egg that I have laid, and crush it, I shall probably verify his observation; and when I feel my spirits rise, and that I am armed with industry sufficient for the purpose, undertake the production of another volume. At present, however, I do not feel myself so disposed; and, indeed, he that would write, should read, not that he may retail the observations of other men, but that, being thus refreshed and replenished, he may find himself in a condition to make and to produce his own. I reckon it among my principal advantages, as a composer of verses, that I have not

English poe t se thirteen years, and but one these ears. Imitation, even of the best models, is my aver- is servile and mechanical, a trick that has enabled usurp the name of author, who could not have written they had not written upon the pattern of somebody riginal. But when the ear and the taste have been customed to the manner of others, it is almost impos- void it; and we imitate in spite of ourselves, just in n as we admire. But enough of this.

nother, who is as well as the season of the year will lesires me to add her love. The salmon you sent us safe, and was remarkably fresh. What a comfort it ve a friend who knows that we love salmon, and who ass by a fishmonger's shop, without finding his desire is some, a temptation too strong to be resisted!

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

R FRIEND, Nov. 26, 1781.

to you by the last post, supposing you at Stock; that letter should not follow you to Laytonstone, and ld suspect me of unreasonable delay, and lest the frank sent me should degenerate into waste paper, and perish hands, I write again. The former letter, however, con- all my present stock of intelligence, it is more than that this may prove a blank, or but little worthy of your ice. You will do me the justice to suppose, that if I very entertaining, I would be so, because, by giving it for such a willingness to please, you only allow me of that universal vanity, which inclines every man, upon ions, to exhibit himself to the best advantage. To say h, however, when I write, as I do to you, not about , nor on any subject that approaches to that descrip- nean much less my correspondent's amusement, which lesty will not always permit me to hope for, than my There is a pleasure annexed to the communication of eas, whether by word of mouth, or by letter, which earthly can supply the place of, and it is the delight we this mutual intercourse, that not only proves us to be s intended for social life, but more than any thing else fits us for it.—I have no patience with philosophers,

—they, one and all, suppose (at least I understand it to be a prevailing opinion among them) that man's weakness, his necessities, his inability to stand alone, have furnished the prevailing motive, under the influence of which he renounced at first a life of solitude, and became a gregarious creature. It seems to me more reasonable, as well as more honourable to my species, to suppose that generosity of soul, and a brotherly attachment to our own kind, drew us, as it were, to one common centre, taught us to build cities, and inhabit them, and welcome every stranger, that would cast in his lot amongst us, that we might enjoy fellowship with each other, and the luxury of reciprocal endearments, without which a paradise could afford no comfort. There are indeed all sorts of characters in the world; there are some whose understandings are so sluggish, and whose hearts are such mere clods, that they live in society without either contributing to the sweets of it, or having any relish for them. A man of this stamp passes by our window continually; he draws patterns for the lace maker's; I never saw him conversing with a neighbour but once in my life, though I have known him by sight these twelve years; he is of a very sturdy make, has a round belly, extremely protuberant, which he evidently considers as his best friend, because it is his only companion, and it is the labour of his life to fill it. I can easily conceive, that it is merely the love of good eating and drinking, and now and then the want of a new pair of shoes, that attaches this man so much to the neigbourhood of his fellow mortals; for suppose these exigencies, and others of a like kind, to subsist no longer, and what is there that could possibly give society the preference in his esteem? He might strut about with his two thumbs upon his hips in a wilderness; he could hardly be more silent than he is at Olney, and for any advantage, or comfort, or friendship, or brotherly affection, he could not be more destitute of such blessings there than in his present situation. But other men have something more than guts to satisfy; there are the yearnings of the heart, which let philosophers say what they will, are more importunate than all the necessities of the body, that will not suffer a creature, worthy to be called human, to be content with an insulated life, or to look for his friends among the beasts of the forest. Yourself for instance! It is *not* because there are no tailors or pastry-cooks to be found

upon Salisbury Plain, that you do not choose it for your abode, but because you are a philanthropist,—because you are susceptible of social impressions, and have a pleasure in doing a kindness when you can.—Witness the salmon you sent, and the salmon you still mean to send; to which your mother wishes you to add a handful of prawns, not only because she likes them, but because they agree with her so well that she even finds them medicinal.

Now upon the word of a poor creature, I have said all that I have said, without the least intention to say one word of it when I began. But thus it is with my thoughts:—when you shake a crab-tree, the fruit falls; good for nothing indeed when you have got it, but still the best that is to be expected from a crab-tree. You are welcome to them, such as they are, and if you approve my sentiments, tell the philosophers of the day, that I have outshot them all, and have discovered the true origin of society, when I least looked for it.

We should be glad to receive this fresh proof of your regard, viz. the additional piece of salmon, at any time before Christmas. W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

THE salmon and lobsters arrived safe, and were remarkably fine; we knew the reason why you sent no prawns, before you mentioned it. Accept our thanks for the welcome present.

I dare say I do not enter exactly into your idea of a present theocracy, because mine amounts to no more than the common one, that all mankind, though few are really aware of it, act under a providential direction, and that a gracious superintendence in particular is the lot of those who trust in God. Thus I think respecting individuals; and with respect to the kingdoms of the earth, that perhaps by his own immediate operation, though more probably by the intervention of angels, (*vide* Daniel,) the great Governor manages and rules them, assigns them their origin, duration, and end, appoints them prosperity or adversity, glory or disgrace, as their virtues or their vices, their regard to the dictates of conscience and his word, or their prevailing neglect of both, may indicate and require. But in this persuasion, as I said, I do not at all deviate from the general opinion of those who believe a Providence, at least who

have a scriptural belief of it. I suppose, therefore, you mean something more, and shall be glad to be more particularly informed.

I am glad—(we are both so) that you are not afraid of seeing your own image multiplied too fast: it is not necessarily a disadvantage. It is sometimes easier to manage and provide for half a dozen children, than to regulate the passions and satisfy the extravagant demands of one. I remember hearing Moses Browne say, that when he had only two or three children, he thought he should have been distracted; but when he had ten or a dozen, he was perfectly easy, and thought no more about the matter.

I see but one feature in the face of our national concerns that pleases me;—the war with America, it seems, is to be conducted on a different plan. This is something; when a long series of measures, of a certain description, has proved unsuccessful, the adoption of others is at least pleasing, as it encourages a hope that they may possibly prove wiser, and more effectual; but, indeed, without discipline, all is lost. Pitt himself could have done nothing with such tools; but he would not have been so betrayed; he would have made the traitors answer with their heads, for their cowardice or supineness, and their punishment would have made survivors active. W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 27, 1781.

FIRST Mr. Wilson, then Mr. Teedon, and lastly Mr. Whitford, each with a cloud of melancholy on his brow, and with a mouth wide open, have just announced to us this unwelcome intelligence from America. We are sorry to hear it, and should be more cast down than we are, if we did not know that this catastrophe was ordained beforehand, and that therefore neither conduct, nor courage, nor any means that can possibly be mentioned, could have prevented it. If the King and his ministry can be contented to close the business here, and, taking poor Dean Tucker's advice, resign the Americans into the hands of their new masters, it may be well for Old England. But if they will still persevere, they will find it, I doubt, an hopeless contest to the last. Domestic murmurs will grow louder, and the hands of faction, being strengthened by this late miscarriage, will find it easy to set fire to the pile of combustibles

they have been so long employed in building. These are my politics; and for aught I can see, you and we by our respective firesides, though neither connected with men in power, nor professing to possess any share of that sagacity which thinks itself qualified to wield the affairs of kingdoms, can make as probable conjectures, and look forward into futurity with as clear a sight, as the greatest man in the cabinet.

Though when I wrote the passage in question, I was not at all aware of any impropriety in it, and though I have frequently since that time both read and recollected it with the same approbation, I lately became uneasy upon the subject, and had no rest in my mind for three days, till I resolved to submit it to a trial at your tribunal, and to dispose of it ultimately according to your sentence. I am glad you have condemned it; and though I do not feel as if I could presently supply its place, shall be willing to attempt the task, whatever labour it may cost me; and rejoice that it will not be in the power of the critics, whatever else they may charge me with, to accuse me of bigotry, or a design to make a certain denomination of Christians odious, at the hazard of the public peace. I had rather my book were burnt, than a single line guilty of such a tendency should escape me.

We thank you for two copies of your Address to your Parishioners. The first I lent to Mr. Scott, whom I have not seen since I put it into his hands. You have managed your subject well; have applied yourself to despisers and absentees of every description, in terms so expressive of the interest you take in their welfare, that the most wrong-headed person cannot be offended. We both wish it may have the effect you intend, and that prejudices and groundless apprehensions being removed, the immediate objects of your ministry may make a more considerable part of your congregation.

I return Mr. Madan's letter, with thanks for a sight of it. Having forfeited all the rest of his most valuable attachments without regret, and sacrificed I suppose many of his dearest connexions to his beloved hypothesis, he still recollects that he had once a warm place in your affections, and seems still unwilling to resign it. It is easy to see that I and my book were mentioned, merely because we afforded him an opportunity to renew a correspondence, which, blind as he is, and intoxicated with error, he still catches at with eagerness, and cannot prevail

with himself to renounce. But yet how obstinate, and, in appearance, how perfectly a stranger to the convincing arguments by which his whole edifice of sophistry and misinterpretation has been so completely demolished! Has he never seen his opponent in the Review? If he has, he ought a least to attempt to answer him. To treat so able and so learned a writer with neglect, is but a paltry subterfuge, and no reasonable man will ever give him credit for the sincerity of the contempt he may affect for a critic so deserving of his attention. If he has not, his behaviour is disingenuous to the last degree, and will, I suppose, as little serve his purpose. A champion has no right to despise his enemy till he has faced and vanquished him. But henceforth I suppose this noisy subject will be silent; may it rest in peace, and may none be hardy enough hereafter to disturb its ashes.

Many thanks for a barrel of oysters, which we are still eating. Nanny Puttenham desires me to send her duty: she is brought to bed, and enjoys a more comfortable frame of mind. The letter from Mr. Old ought to have waited on you with my last, but was forgot. Our best love attends yourself and Mrs. Newton. Yours, my dear Sir, as ever, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

[FRAGMENT.]

MY DEAR FRIEND, The same date.

A VISIT from Mr. Whitford shortened one of your letters to me; and now the same cause has operated with the same effect upon one of mine to you. He is just gone; desired me to send his love, and talks of enclosing a letter to you in my next cover.

Literas tuas irato Sacerdoti scriptas, legi, perlegi, et ne verbum quidem mutandum censeo. Gratias tibi acturum si sapiat, existimo; sin alitèr eveniat, amici tamen officium præstitisti, et te coram te vindicásti.

I have not written in Latin to show my scholarship, nor to excite Mrs. Newton's curiosity, nor for any other wise reason whatever; but merely because, just at that moment, it came into my head to do so.

Mrs. Unwin having suggested the hint, I have added just as many lines to my poem lately mentioned as make up the whole number two hundred. I had no intention to write a round sum, but it has happened so. She thought there was a

fair opportunity to give the Bishops a slap: and as it would not have been civil to have denied a lady so reasonable a request, I have just made the powder fly out of their wigs a little.

I never wrote a copy of Mary and John in my life, except that which I sent to you. It was one of those bagatelles which sometimes spring up like mushrooms in my imagination, either while I am writing or just before I begin. I sent it to you, because to you I send any thing that I think may raise a smile; but should never have thought of multiplying the impression. Neither did I ever repeat them to any one except Mrs. Unwin. The inference is fair and easy, that you have some friend who has a good memory.

This afternoon the maid opened the parlour-door, and told us there was a lady in the kitchen. We desired she might be introduced, and prepared for the reception of Mrs. Jones. But it proved to be a lady unknown to us, and not Mrs. Jones. She walked directly up to Mrs. Unwin, and never drew back till their noses were almost in contact. It seemed as if she meant to salute her. An uncommon degree of familiarity, accompanied with an air of most extraordinary gravity, made me think her a little crazy. I was alarmed, and so was Mrs. Unwin. She had a bundle in her hand—a silk handkerchief tied up at the four corners. When I found she was not mad, I took her for a smuggler, and made no doubt but she had brought samples of contraband goods. But our surprise, considering the lady's appearance and deportment, was tenfold what it had been, when we found that it was Mary Philips's daughter, who had brought us a few apples by way of a specimen of a quantity she had for sale. She drank tea with us, and behaved herself during the rest of her stay with much—*cætera desunt*.

TO MR. JOHNSON, BOOKSELLER.

SIR, Olney, Nov. 27, 1781.

You will oblige me by telling me in your next, whether, if I should find it proper to displace a paragraph in *Expostulation*, and substitute another in its stead, there is yet time for the purpose. I have doubts about the expedience of mentioning the subject on which that paragraph is written.

Many thanks for your judicious remarks.

I am, &c. WM. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 30, 1781.

THOUGH I have a deal of wit, and Mrs. Unwin has much more, it would require more than our joint stock amounts to, to answer all the demands of these gloomy days and long evenings. Books are the only remedy I can think of, but books are a commodity we deal but little in at Olney. If therefore it may consist with your other various multifarious concerns, I shall be obliged to you if you will be so good as to subscribe for me to some well-furnished circulating library, and leave my address upon the counter, written in a legible hand, and order them to send me down a catalogue. Their address you will be so good as to transmit to me, and then you shall have no further trouble.

This being merely a letter of business I add no more, but that

I am yours, WM. COWPER.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 2, 1781.

I THANK you for the note. There is some advantage in having a tenant who is irregular in his payments: the longer the rent is withheld, the more considerable the sum when it arrives; to which we may add, that its arrival being unexpected, a circumstance that obtains always in a degree exactly in proportion to the badness of the tenant, is always sure to be the occasion of an agreeable surprise; a sensation that deserves to be ranked among the pleasantest that belong to us.

I gave two hundred and fifty pounds for the chambers. Mr. Ashurst's receipt, and the receipt of the person of whom he purchased, are both among my papers; and when wanted, as I suppose they will be in case of a sale, shall be forthcoming at your order.

The conquest of America seems to go on but slowly. Our ill success in that quarter will oblige me to suppress two pieces that I was rather proud of. They were written two or three years ago; not long after the double repulse sustained by Mr. D'Estaing at Lucia and at Savannah, and when our operations in the western world wore a more promising aspect. Presuming, upon such promises, that I might venture to prophesy an illustrious consummation of the war, I did so. But my pre-

dictions proving false, the verse in which they were expressed must perish with them.

Since I began to write, I have searched all the papers I have, and cannot find the receipts above-mentioned. I hope, however, they are not essential to the validity of the transaction.

Yours, my dear Sir, Wm. COWPER.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 4, 1781.

THE present to the Queen of France, and the piece addressed to Sir Joshua Reynolds, my only two political efforts, being of the predictive kind, and both falsified, or likely to be so, by the miscarriage of the royal cause in America, were already condemned when I received your last. I have a poetical epistle which I wrote last summer, and another poem not yet finished, in stanzas, with which I mean to supply their places. Henceforth I have done with politics. The stage of national affairs is such a fluctuating scene, that an event which appears probable to-day becomes impossible to-morrow; and unless a man were indeed a prophet, he cannot, but with the greatest hazard of losing his labour, bestow his rhymes upon future contingencies, which perhaps are never to take place but in his own wishes and in the reveries of his own fancy. I learned when I was a boy, being the son of a staunch Whig, and a man that loved his country, to glow with that patriotic enthusiasm which is apt to break forth into poetry, or at least to prompt a person, if he has any inclination that way, to poetical endeavours. Prior's pieces of that sort were recommended to my particular notice; and as that part of the present century was a season when clubs of a political character, and consequently political songs, were much in fashion, the best in that style, some written by Rowe, and I think some by Congreve, and many by other wits of the day, were proposed to my admiration. Being grown up, I became desirous of imitating such bright examples, and while I lived in the Temple produced several halfpenny ballads, two or three of which had the honour to be popular. What we learn in childhood we retain long; and the successes we met with, about three years ago, when D'Estaing was twice repulsed, once in America, and once in the West Indies, having set fire to my patriotic zeal once more, it discovered itself by

the same symptoms, and produced effects much like those it had produced before. But, unhappily, the ardour I felt upon the occasion, disdaining to be confined within the bounds of fact pushed me upon uniting the prophetical with the poetical character, and defeated its own purpose. I am glad it did. The less there is of that sort in my book the better; it will be more consonant to your character, who patronise the volume, and, indeed, to the constant tenor of my own thoughts upon public matters, that I should exhort my countrymen to repentance, than that I should flatter their pride—that vice for which, perhaps, they are even now so severely punished.

I subjoin the lines with which I mean to supersede the obnoxious ones in Expostulation. If it should lie fairly in your way to do it, I will beg of you to deliver them to Johnson, and at the same time to strike your pen through the offensive passage. I ask it merely because it will save a frank, but not unless you can do it without inconvenience to yourself. The new paragraph consists exactly of the same number of lines with the old one, for upon this occasion I worked like a tailor when he sews a patch upon a hole in your coat, supposing it might be necessary to do so. Upon second thoughts I will enclose the lines instead of adding them *ad calcem*, that I may save you the trouble of a transcript.

We are glad, for Mr. Barham's sake, that he has been so happily disappointed. How little does the world suspect what passes in it every day!—that true religion is working the same wonders now as in the first ages of the church,—that parents surrender up their children into the hands of God, to die at his own appointed moment, and by what death he pleases, without a murmur, and receive them again as if by a resurrection from the dead! The world, however, would be more justly chargeable with wilful blindness than it is, if all professors of the truth exemplified its power in their conduct as conspicuously as Mr. Barham.

Easterly winds, and a state of confinement within our own walls, suit neither me nor Mrs. Unwin; though we are both, to use the Irish term rather unwell than ill. The cocoa nut, though it had not a drop of liquor in it, and though the kernel came out whole, entirely detached from the shell, was an exceeding good one. Our hearts are with you.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

Mrs. Madan is happy. She will be found ripe, fall when she may.

We are sorry you speak doubtfully about a spring visit to Olney. Those doubts must not outlive the winter.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 9, 1781.

HAVING returned you many thanks for the fine cod and oysters you favoured me with, though it is now morning I will suppose it afternoon, that you and I dined together, are comfortably situated by a good fire, and just entering on a sociable conversation. You speak first, because I am a man of few words.

Well, Cowper, what do you think of this American war?

I. To say the truth I am not very fond of thinking about it; when I do I think of it, unpleasantly enough. I think it bids fair to be the ruin of the country.

You. That's very unpleasant indeed! If that should be the consequence, it will be the fault of those who might put a stop to it if they would.

I. But do you really think that practicable?

You. Why not? If people leave off fighting, peace follows of course. I wish they would withdraw the forces and put an end to the squabble.

Now I am going to make a long speech.

I. You know the complexion of my sentiments upon some subjects well enough, and that I do not look upon public events either as fortuitous, or absolutely derivable either from the wisdom or folly of man. These indeed operate as second causes; but we must look for the cause of the decline or the prosperity of an empire elsewhere. I have long since done complaining of men and measures, having learned to consider them merely as the instruments of a higher Power, by which he either bestows wealth, peace, and dignity upon a nation when he favours it; or by which he strips it of all those honours, when public enormities long persisted in provoke him to inflict a public punishment. The counsels of great men become as foolish and preposterous when he is pleased to make them so, as those of the frantic creatures in Bedlam, when they lay their distracted heads together to consider of the state of the nation. But I go still farther. The wisdom, or the

want of wisdom, that we observe or think we observe in those that rule us, entirely out of the question, I cannot look upon the circumstances of this country, without being persuaded that I discern in them an entanglement and perplexity that I have never met with in the history of any other, which I think preternatural (if I may use the word on such a subject), prodigious in its kind, and such as human sagacity can never remedy. I have a good opinion of the understanding and integrity of some in power, yet I see plainly that they are unequal to the task. I think as favourably of some that are not in power, yet I am sure they have never yet in any of their speeches recommended the plan that would effect the salutary purpose. If we pursue the war, it is because we are desperate; it is plunging and sinking year after year into still greater depths of calamity. If we relinquish it, the remedy is equally desperate, and would prove I believe in the end no remedy at all. Either way we are undone. Perseverance will only enfeeble us more; we cannot recover the colonies by arms. If we discontinue the attempt, in that case we fling away voluntarily what in the other we strive ineffectually to regain; and whether we adopt the one measure or the other, are equally undone: for I consider the loss of America as the ruin of England. Were we less encumbered than we are at home, we could but ill afford it; but being crushed as we are under an enormous debt that the public credit can at no rate carry much longer, the consequence is sure. Thus it appears to me that we are squeezed to death, between the two sides of that sort of alternative which is commonly called a cleft stick, the most threatening and portentous condition in which the interests of any country can possibly be found.

I think I have done pretty well for a man of few words, and have contrived to have all the talk to myself. I thank you for not interrupting me.

Yours, my dear friend, WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 17, 1781.

THE poem I had in hand when I wrote last is on the subject of Friendship. By the following post I received a packet from Johnson. The proof-sheet it contained brought our business down to the latter part of *Retirement*; the next will conse-

quently introduce the first of the smaller pieces. The volume consisting, at least four-fifths of it, of heroic verse as it is called and the graver matter, I was desirous to displace the Burning Mountain from the post it held in the van of the light infantry, and throw it into the rear. Having finished *Friendship*, and fearing that if I delayed to send it, the press would get the start of my intention, and knowing perfectly that with respect to the subject, and the subject matter of it, it contained nothing that you would think exceptionable, I took the liberty to transmit it to Johnson, and hope that the next post will return it to me printed. It consists of between thirty and forty stanzas: a length that qualifies it to supply the place of the two cancelled pieces, without the aid of the Epistle I mentioned. According to the present arrangement, therefore, *Friendship*, which is rather of a lively cast, though quite sober, will follow next after *Retirement*, and *Ætna* will close the volume. Modern naturalists, I think, tell us that the volcano forms the mountain. I shall be charged therefore, perhaps, with an unphilosophical error in supposing that Ætna was once unconscious of intestine fires, and as lofty as at present before the commencement of the eruptions. It is possible, however, that the rule, though just in some instances, may not be of universal application; and if it be, I do not know that a poet is obliged to write with a philosopher at his elbow, prepared always to bind down his imagination to mere matters of fact. You will oblige me by your opinion; and tell me, if you please, whether you think an apologetical note may be necessary; for I would not appear a dunce in matters that every Review-reader must needs be apprized of. I say a note, because an alteration of the piece is impracticable; at least without cutting off its head, and setting on a new one; a task I should not readily undertake, because the lines which must, in that case, be thrown out, are some of the most poetical in the performance.

Possessing greater advantages, and being equally dissolute with the most abandoned of the neighbouring nations, we are certainly more criminal than they. They *cannot* see, and we *will* not. It is to be expected, therefore, that when judgement is walking through the earth, it will come commissioned with the heaviest tidings to the people chargeable with the most perverseness. In the latter part of the Duke of Newcastle's

administration, all faces gathered blackness. The people, as they walked the streets, had, every one of them, a countenance like what we may suppose to have been the prophet Jonah's, when he cried "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed." But our Nineveh too repented, that is to say, she was affected in a manner somewhat suitable to her condition. She was dejected; she learned an humbler language, and seemed, if she did not trust in God, at least to have renounced her confidence in herself. A respite ensued; the expected ruin was averted; and her prosperity became greater than ever. Again she became self-conceited and proud, as at the first; and how stands it with our Nineveh now? Even as you say; her distress is infinite, her destruction appears inevitable, and her heart as hard as the nether millstone. Thus, I suppose, it was when ancient Nineveh found herself agreeably disappointed; she turned the grace of God into lasciviousness, and that flagrant abuse of mercy exposed her, at the expiration of forty years, to the complete execution of a sentence she had only been threatened with before. A similarity of events, accompanied by a strong similarity of conduct, seems to justify our expectations that the catastrophe will not be very different. But after all, the designs of Providence are inscrutable, and as in the case of individuals, so in that of nations, the same causes do not always produce the same effects. The country indeed cannot be saved in its present state of profligacy and profaneness, but may, nevertheless, be led to repentance by means we are little aware of, and at a time when we least expect it.

In the mislaid letters I took notice of certain disagreeable doubts you had expressed in one enclosed to us and unsealed, concerning your visit next spring to Olney. You will be so good as to send those doubts packing, and convince them that they are unreasonable intruders, by coming down as soon as your famous festival is over. We have to thank you for a barrel of oysters, exceeding good.

Our best love attends yourself and Mrs. Newton, and we rejoice that you feel no burdens but those you bear in common with the liveliest and most favoured Christians.—It is a happiness in poor Peggy's case that she can swallow five shillings' worth of physic in a day, but a person must be in her case to be duly sensible of it.

Yours, my dear Sir, W. C.

Mrs. Unwin begs Mrs. Newton's acceptance of a couple of chickens. She would have sent a goose, but none have come our way.

James Robinson was buried on Sunday. The opinion of the well-informed is that his drams cost him a guinea a week to the last.

TO MR. JOHNSON, BOOKSELLER.

SIR, 1781.

I ALWAYS ascribe your silence to the cause you assign for it yourself. I inclose *Friendship*, in hopes that it may arrive in time to stand the foremost of the smaller pieces, instead of *Ætna*, which, perhaps, had better be placed at the end. Such a length of the *penseroso* will make the *allegro* doubly welcome; but if the press has gone forward and begun *Ætna*, it is of no great importance: otherwise I should prefer this arrangement, as we shall then begin and end with a compliment to the King—who (poor man) may at this time be glad of such a tribute.

Instead of the fifth line in the supplemental passage you have received, in which the word *disgrace* is inadvertently repeated, being mentioned in the first, I would wish you to insert the following—

"When sin has shed dishonour on thy brow."

But if the passage is already printed I can make the alteration myself when the sheet comes down for the last revisal.

P. 288 ———"because they must."

I suppose you scored these words as of an import too similar to the word *convenience*, I have therefore relieved the objection by the word *self-impoverished;* otherwise it does not appear to me that the expression is objectionable: it is plain, indeed, but not bald. I am Sir,

Your most obedient servant, W^M^. COWPER.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, The shortest day, 1781.

I MIGHT easily make this letter a continuation of my last, another national miscarriage having furnished me with a fresh illustration of the remarks we have both been making. Mr.

Smith, who has most obligingly supplied me with franks throughout my whole concern with Johnson, accompanied the last parcel he sent me with a note dated from the House of Commons, in which he seemed happy to give me the earliest intelligence of the capture of the French transports by Admiral Kempenfelt, and of a close engagement between the two fleets, so much to be expected. This note was written on Monday, and reached me by Wednesday's post; but alas! the same post brought us the newspaper that informed us of his being forced to fly before a much superior enemy, and glad to take shelter in the port he had left so lately. This event, I suppose, will have worse consequences than the mere disappointment; will furnish opposition, as all our ill success has done, with the fuel of dissension, and with the means of thwarting and perplexing administration. Thus all we purchase with the many millions expended yearly, is distress to ourselves, instead of our enemies, and domestic quarrels, instead of victories abroad. It takes a great many blows to knock down a great nation; and, in the case of poor England, a great many heavy ones have not been wanting. They make us reel and stagger, indeed; but the blow is not yet struck that is to make us fall upon our knees. That fall would save us; but if we fall upon our side at last, we are undone. So much for politics. Next comes news from the north of a different complexion, which it is possible may be news to you.

Mr. Fletcher, on his recovery from his late dangerous illness, has started up a Perfectionist. He preached perfection not long since at Dewsbury, where Mr. Powley and his curate heard him. He told the people that he that sinned was no Christian, that he himself did not sin, *ergo* had a right to the appellation. Mr. Powley was so shocked by his violent distortion of the Scriptures, by which he attempted to prove his doctrine, that he thought it necessary to preach expressly against him the ensuing Sabbath; and when he was desired to admit the perfect man into his pulpit, of course refused it. I have heard that he is remarkably spiritual. Can this be? Is it possible that a person of that description can be left to indulge himself in such a proud conceit,—is it possible he should be so defective in self-knowledge, and so little acquainted with his own heart? If I had not heard you yourself speak favourably of *him*, I should little scruple to say, that having spent much of

his life, and exerted all his talents, in the defence of Arminian errors, he is at last left to fall into an error more pernicious than Arminius is to be charged with, or the most ignorant of his disciples. When I hear that you are engaged in the propagation of error, I shall believe that an humble and dependant mind is not yet secured from it, and that the promises which annex the blessing of instruction to a temper teachable and truly child-like, are to be received *cum grano salis*, and understood with a limitation. Mr. Wesley has also been very troublesome in the same place, and asserted, in perfect harmony of sentiment with his brother Fletcher, that Mr. Whitefield disseminated more false doctrine in the nation, than he should ever be able to eradicate. Methinks they do not see through a glass darkly, but for want of a glass they see not at all.

I enclose a few lines on a thought which struck me yesterday. If you approve of them, you know what to do with them. I should think they might occupy the place of an introduction, and should call them by that name, if I did not judge the name I have given them necessary for the information of the reader. A flatting-mill is not met with in every street, and my book will, perhaps, fall into the hands of many who do not know that such a mill was ever invented. It happened to me, however, to spend much of my time in one, when I was a boy, when I frequently amused myself with watching the operation I describe.

Mrs. Unwin sends her love, and will be much obliged to Mrs. Newton if she will order her down a loaf of sugar, from nine pence to ten pence the pound, for the use of my sweet self at breakfast. The sugar merchant, if she will be so kind as to give him the necessary instruction, will be paid by the bookkeeper at the inn. Yours, my dear Sir, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, The last day of 1781.

YESTERDAY'S post, which brought me yours, brought me a packet from Johnson. We have reached the middle of the Mahometan Hog. By the way, your lines, which, when we had the pleasure of seeing you here, you said you would furnish him with, are not inserted in it. I did not recollect, till after I had finished the *Flatting Mill*, that it bore any affinity to the motto taken from Caraccioli. The resemblance, however,

did not appear to me to give any impropriety to the verses, as the thought is much enlarged upon, and enlivened by the addition of a new comparison. But if it is not wanted, it is superfluous; and if superfluous, better omitted. I shall not bumble Johnson for finding fault with *Friendship*, though I have a better opinion of it myself; but a poet is, of all men, the most unfit to be judge in his own cause. Partial to all his productions, he is always most partial to the youngest. But as there is a sufficient quantity without it, let that sleep too. If I should live to write again, I may possibly take up that subject a second time, and clothe it in a different dress. It abounds with excellent matter, and much more than I could find room for in two or three pages.

I consider England and America as once one country. They were so, in respect of interest, intercourse, and affinity. A great earthquake has made a partition, and now the Atlantic ocean flows between them. He that can drain that ocean, and shove the two shores together, so as to make them aptly coincide, and meet each other in every part, can unite them again. But this is a work for Omnipotence, and nothing less than Omnipotence can heal the breach between us. This dispensation is evidently a scourge to England;—but is it a blessing to America? Time may prove it one, but at present it does not seem to wear an aspect favourable to their privileges, either civil or religious. I cannot doubt the truth of Dr. W.'s assertion; but the French who pay but little regard to treaties that clash with their convenience, without a treaty, and even in direct contradiction to verbal engagements, can easily pretend a claim to a country which they have both bled and paid for; and if the validity of that claim be disputed, behold an army ready landed, and well-appointed, and in possession of some of the most fruitful provinces, prepared to prove it. A scourge is a scourge at one end only. A bundle of thunderbolts, such as you have seen in the talons of Jupiter's eagle, is at both ends equally tremendous, and can inflict a judgement upon the West, at the same moment that it seems to intend only the chastisement of the East.

In my last letter, in which I desired your opinion of Ætna, whether its poetical merits might not atone for its philosophical defects, I begged the favour of Mrs. Newton to get the silk knitting dyed black. Mrs. Unwin will take care of the hams, but the pig is not likely to bequeath them yet: she is sorry

that Mrs. Newton has bespoke them, having one in cure for her at this time. Is very much disappointed that she cannot procure a goose, but has a couple of very fine fowls, which wait your orders, and will be sent at whatever time you shall appoint. She will be glad of a loaf of sugar, the grocer to be paid at the inn.

I should have sent you a longer letter, but a visitor who is more tedious than entertaining has rather disconcerted me, and exhausted my spirits. "Your humble servant, Sir—I hope I see you well.—I thank you, Madam, but indifferent. I have had a violent colic, which providentially took a turn downwards, or I think I must have died. Seven or eight times in a night, Madam. My neighbour Banister has the same disorder, and is remarkably costive, so that I verily fear for his life. Yes truly, I think the poor man cannot get over it." This is a small specimen—how should you like the whole? I can find you a sheet full of the like whenever you please, taken faithfully from his lips.

Our joint love attends you both. We rejoice to hear that Mrs. Newton is better. Yours, my dear sir, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Jan. 5, 1782.

DID I allow myself to plead the common excuse of idle correspondents, and esteem it a sufficient reason for not writing, that I have nothing to write about, I certainly should not write now. But I have so often found, on similar occasions, when a great penury of matter has seemed to threaten me with an utter impossibility of hatching a letter, that nothing is necessary but to put pen to paper, and go on, in order to conquer all difficulties,—that, availing myself of past experience, I now begin with a most assured persuasion, that sooner or later, one idea naturally suggesting another, I shall come to a most prosperous conclusion.

In the last Review, I mean in the last but one, I saw Johnson's critique upon Prior and Pope. I am bound to acquiesce in his opinion of the latter, because it has always been my own. I could never agree with those who preferred him to Dryden; nor with others, (I have known such, and persons of taste and discernment too,) who could not allow him to be a poet at all. He was certainly a mechanical maker of verses, and in every

line he ever wrote, we see indubitable marks of the most indefatigable industry and labour. Writers who find it necessary to make such strenuous and painful exertions, are generally as phlegmatic as they are correct; but Pope was, in this respect, exempted from the common lot of authors of that class. With the unwearied application of a plodding Flemish painter, who draws a shrimp with the most minute exactness, he had all the genius of one of the first masters. Never, I believe, were such talents and such drudgery united. But I admire Dryden most, who has succeeded by mere dint of genius, and in spite of a laziness and carelessness almost peculiar to himself. His faults are numberless, but so are his beauties. His faults are those of a great man, and his beauties are such, (at least sometimes,) as Pope with all his touching and retouching could never equal. So far, therefore, I have no quarrel with Johnson. But I cannot subscribe to what he says of Prior. In the first place, though my memory may fail me, I do not recollect that he takes any notice of his Solomon; in my mind the best poem, whether we consider the subject of it, or the execution, that he ever wrote. In the next place, he condemns him for introducing Venus and Cupid into his love-verses, and concludes it impossible his passion could be sincere, because when he would express it he has recourse to fables. But when Prior wrote, those deities were not so obsolete as now. His contemporary writers, and some that succeeded him, did not think them beneath their notice. Tibullus, in reality, disbelieved their existence as much as we do; yet Tibullus is allowed to be the prince of all poetical inamoratos, though he mentions them in almost every page. There is a fashion in these things which the Doctor seems to have forgotten. But what shall we say of his old fusty-rusty remarks upon Henry and Emma? I agree with him, that morally considered both the knight and his lady are bad characters, and that each exhibits an example which ought not to be followed. The man dissembles in a way that would have justified the woman had she renounced him; and the woman resolves to follow him at the expense of delicacy, propriety, and even modesty itself. But when the critic calls it a dull dialogue, who but a critic will believe him? There are few readers of poetry of either sex, in this country, who cannot remember how that enchanting piece has bewitched them, who do not know, that instead

of finding it tedious, they have been so delighted with the romantic turn of it, as to have overlooked all its defects, and to have given it a consecrated place in their memories, without ever feeling it a burthen. I wonder almost that, as the Bacchanals served Orpheus, the boys and girls do not tear this husky, dry commentator limb from limb, in resentment of such an injury done to their darling poet. I admire Johnson as a man of great erudition and sense; but when he sets himself up for a judge of writers upon the subject of love, a passion which I suppose he never felt in his life, he might as well think himself qualified to pronounce upon a treatise on horsemanship, or the art of fortification.

The next packet I receive will bring me, I imagine, the last proof sheet of my volume, which will consist of about three hundred and fifty pages honestly printed. My public *entrée* therefore is not far distant.

Had we known that the last cheeses were naught, we would not have sent you these. Your mother has however enquired for and found a better dairy, which she means shall furnish you with cheese another year. Your's, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Jan. 13, 1782.

HAVING just read yours, I begin to answer it; the basket presenting me with a fair opportunity to save a frank, and my time being entirely at my own disposal, which possibly may not be the case to-morrow. As to Johnson, he sometimes promises fair, and proceeds with tolerable dispatch, so that I begin to flatter myself with the hope of a speedy publication; then comes an interval of three weeks perhaps, and nothing done. It is a fortnight this day since I returned his last packet, and though one more cover may contain all that is yet behind, I know not but another week at least may elapse before he sends it. Then we are to begin again, and the whole is to undergo a second revisal, which, if it proceeds as slowly as the first, will cost another year. In the meanwhile, having some, though not the keenest, feelings of an author, I am not always very well pleased. I suspect that he gives a preference to others who engaged him not so early as myself, and that my distance from the spot is used to my disadvantage. But having other and much weightier cares and concerns to carry, I pre-

sently discharge my shoulders of this, and am but little incumbered by it. If it should fall in your way to ask him what he intends, or whether he does not think that we are in some danger of losing the season, considering how much remains to be done, I shall be obliged to you for putting the question to him.

Your answer respecting Ætna is quite satisfactory, and gives me much pleasure. I hate altering, though I never refuse the task when propriety seems to enjoin it; and an alteration in this instance, if I am not mistaken, would have been singularly difficult. Indeed, when a piece has been finished two or three years, and an author finds occasion to amend, or make an addition to it, it is not easy to fall upon the very vein from which he drew his ideas in the first instance; but either a different turn of thought, or expression, will betray the patch, and convince a reader of discernment that it has been cobbled and vamped.

I believe I did not thank you for your anecdotes, either foreign or domestic, in my last, therefore I do it now; and still feel myself, as I did at the time, truly obliged to you for them. More is to be learned from one matter of fact than from a thousand speculations. But, alas! what course can government take? I have heard (for I never made the experiment) that if a man grasp a red hot iron with his naked hand, it will stick to him, so that he cannot presently disengage himself from it. Such are the colonies in the hands of administration. While they hold them they burn their fingers, and yet they must not quit them. I know not whether your sentiments and mine upon this part of the subject exactly coincide, but you will know, when you understand what mine are. It appears to me, that the King is bound, both by the duty he owes to himself and to his people, to consider himself with respect to every inch of his territories, as a trustee deriving his interest in them from God, and invested with them by divine authority for the benefit of his subjects. As he may not sell them or waste them, so he may not resign them to an enemy, or transfer his right to govern them to any, not even to themselves so long as it is possible for him to keep it. If he does, he betrays at once his own interest, and that of his other dominions. It may be said, suppose Providence has ordained that they shall be wrested from him, how then? I answer, that

cannot appear to be the case, till God's purpose is actually accomplished; and in the mean time the most probable prospect of such an event does not release him from his obligation to hold them to the last moment, for as much as adverse appearances are no infallible indication of God's designs, but may give place to more comfortable symptoms, when we least expect it. Viewing the thing in this light, if I sat on his Majesty's throne, I should be as obstinate as he; because if I quitted the contest, while I had any means left of carrying it on, I should never know that I had not relinquished what I might have retained, or be able to render a satisfactory answer to the doubts and enquiries of my own conscience.

I am rather pleased that you have adopted other sentiments respecting our intended present to the critical Doctor. I allow him to be a man of gigantic talents, and most profound learning, nor have any doubts about the universality of his knowledge. But by what I have seen of his animadversions on the poets, I feel myself much disposed to question, in many instances, either his candour or his taste. He finds fault too often, like a man that, having sought it very industriously, is at last obliged to stick it upon a pin's point, and look at it through a microscope; and I am sure I could easily convict him of having denied many beauties, and overlooked more. Whether his judgement be in itself defective, or whether it be warped by collateral considerations, a writer upon such subjects as I have chosen would probably find but little mercy at his hands.

We are truly sorry to hear you speak so doubtfully of your journey hither, and hope a substitute will be found: are thankful for a sight of your new convert's letter, and hope it will prove the harbinger of many yet unborn. The sugar has arrived safe, and Mrs. Unwin thanks Mrs. Newton for her care of it. Poor Peggy! one would have hoped she might have been safe from such a rencontre in an hospital. We are glad however that she is better. Be pleased to remember us to Sally.

Mr. Scott will be upon the road to-morrow. Our love to you both, and to the young Euphrosyne; the old lady of that name being long since dead, if she pleases she shall fill her vacant office, and be my Muse hereafter.

Your's, my dear Sir, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, Jan. 17, 1782.

I AM glad we agree in our opinion of King Critic, and the writers on whom he has bestowed his animadversions. It is a matter of indifference to me whether I think with the world at large or not, but I wish my friends to be of my mind. The same work will wear a different appearance in the eyes of the same man, according to the different views with which he reads it; if merely for his amusement, his candour being in less danger of a twist from interest or prejudice, he is pleased with what is really pleasing, and is not over curious to discover a blemish, because the exercise of a minute exactness is not consistent with his purpose. But if he once becomes a critic by trade, the case is altered. He must then at any rate establish, if he can, an opinion in every mind, of his uncommon discernment, and his exquisite taste. This great end he can never accomplish by thinking in the track that has been beaten under the hoof of public judgement. He must endeavour to convince the world, that their favourite authors have more faults than they are aware of, and such as they have never suspected. Having marked out a writer universally esteemed, whom he finds it for that very reason convenient to depreciate and traduce, he will overlook some of his beauties, he will faintly praise others, and in such a manner as to make thousands, more modest, though quite as judicious as himself, question whether they are beauties at all. Can there be a stronger illustration of all that I have said, than the severity of Johnson's remarks upon Prior, I might have said the injustice? His reputation as an author who, with much labour indeed, but with admirable success, has embellished all his poems with the most charming ease, stood unshaken till Johnson thrust his head against it. And how does he attack him in this his principal fort? I can recollect his very words, but I am much mistaken indeed if my memory fails me with respect to the purport of them. "His words," he says, "appear to be forced into their proper places; there indeed we find them, but find likewise that their arrangement has been the effect of constraint, and that without violence they would certainly have stood in a different order." By your leave, *most* learned Doctor, this is the most disingenuous remark *I* ever met with, and would have come with a better grace from

Curl or Dennis. Every man conversant with verse-writing knows, and knows by painful experience, that the familiar style is of all styles the most difficult to succeed in. To make verse speak the language of prose, without being prosaic,—to marshal the words of it in such an order as they might naturally take in falling from the lips of an extemporary speaker, yet without meanness, harmoniously, elegantly, and without seeming to displace a syllable for the sake of the rhyme, is one of the most arduous tasks a poet can undertake. He that could accomplish this task was Prior; many have imitated his excellence in this particular, but the best copies have fallen far short of the original. And now to tell us, after we and our fathers have admired him for it so long, that he is an easy writer indeed, but that his ease has an air of stiffness in it, in short, that his ease is not ease, but only something like it, what is it but a self-contradiction, an observation that grants what it is just going to deny, and denies what it has just granted, in the same sentence, and in the same breath? But I have filled the greatest part of my sheet with a very uninteresting subject. I will only say, that as a nation we are not much indebted, in point of poetical credit, to this too sagacious and unmerciful judge; and that for myself in particular, I have reason to rejoice that he entered upon and exhausted the labours of his office before my poor volume could possibly become an object of them. By the way, you cannot have a book at the time you mention; I have lived a fortnight or more in expectation of the last sheet, which is not yet arrived.

You have already furnished John's memory with by far the greatest part of what a parent would wish to store it with. If all that is merely trivial, and all that has an immoral tendency, were expunged from our English poets, how would they shrink, and how would some of them completely vanish! I believe there are some of Dryden's Fables which he would find very entertaining; they are for the most part fine compositions, and not above his apprehension; but Dryden has written few things that are not blotted here and there with an unchaste allusion, so that you must pick his way for him, lest he should tread in the dirt. You did not mention Milton's Allegro and Penseroso, which I remember being so charmed with when I was a boy that I was never weary of them. There are even passages in the paradisiacal part of the Paradise Lost,

which he might study with advantage. And to teach him, as you can, to deliver some of the fine orations made in the Pandæmonium, and those between Satan, Ithuriel, and Zephon, with emphasis, dignity, and propriety, might be of great use to him hereafter. The sooner the ear is formed, and the organs of speech are accustomed to the various inflections of the voice, which the rehearsal of those passages demands, the better. I should think too, that Thomson's Seasons might afford him some useful lessons. At least they would have a tendency to give his mind an observing and a philosophical turn. I do not forget that he is but a child. But I remember that he is a child favoured with talents superior to his years. We were much pleased with his remarks on your almsgiving, and doubt not but it will be verified with respect to the two guineas you sent us, which have made four Christian people happy. Ships I have none, nor have touched a pencil these three years; if ever I take it up again, which I rather suspect I shall not (the employment requiring stronger eyes than mine), it shall be at John's service.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Jan. 31, 1782.

HAVING thanked you for a barrel of very fine oysters, I should have nothing more to say, if I did not determine to say every thing that may happen to occur. The political world affords us no very agreeable subjects at present, nor am I sufficiently conversant with it, to do justice to so magnificent a theme, if it did. A man that lives as I do, whose chief occupation, at this season of the year, is to walk ten times in a day from the fire-side to his cucumber frame and back again, cannot show his wisdom more, if he has any wisdom to show, than by leaving the mysteries of government to the management of persons, in point of situation and information, much better qualified for the business. Suppose not, however, that I am perfectly an unconcerned spectator, or that I take no interest at all in the affairs of my country; far from it—I read the news—I see that things go wrong in every quarter. I meet, now and then, with an account of some disaster that seems to be the indisputable progeny of treachery, cowardice, or a spirit of faction; I recollect that in those happier days, when you

and I could spend our evening in enumerating victories and acquisitions that seemed to follow each other in a continued series, there was some pleasure in hearing a politician; and a man might talk away upon so entertaining a subject, without danger of becoming tiresome to others, or incurring weariness himself. When poor Bob White brought me the news of Boscawen's success off the coast of Portugal, how did I leap for joy! When Hawke demolished Conflans, I was still more transported. But nothing could express my rapture, when Wolfe made the conquest of Quebec. I am not, therefore, I suppose destitute of true patriotism, but the course of public events has, of late, afforded me no opportunity to exert it. I cannot rejoice, because I see no reason, and I will not murmur, because for that I can find no good one. And let me add, he that has seen both sides of fifty, has lived to little purpose, if he has not other views of the world than he had when he was much younger. He finds, if he reflects at all, that it will be to the end, what it has been from the beginning, a shifting, uncertain, fluctuating scene; that nations, as well as individuals, have their seasons of infancy, youth, and age. If he be an Englishman, he will observe that ours, in particular, is affected with every symptom of decay, and is already sunk into a state of decrepitude. I am reading Mrs. M'Aulay's History. I am not quite such a superannuated simpleton, as to suppose that mankind were wiser or much better, when I was young, than they are now. But I may venture to assert, without exposing myself to the charge of dotage, that the men whose integrity, courage, and wisdom, broke the bands of tyranny, established our constitution upon its true basis, and gave a people, overwhelmed with the scorn of all countries, an opportunity to emerge into a state of the highest respect and estimation, make a better figure in history than any of the present day are likely to do, when their pretty harangues are forgotten, and nothing shall survive but the remembrance of the views and motives with which they made them.

My dear friend, I have written at random, in every sense, neither knowing what sentiments I should broach, when I began, nor whether they would accord with yours. Excuse a rustic, if he errs on such a subject, and believe me sincerely yours,

W^M^. COWPER.

TO MR. JOHNSON, BOOKSELLER.

SIR, Jan. 31, 1782.

You will find your two queries satisfied by the correction of the press.

P. 338. Though perhaps the exactest rhymes may not be required in these lighter pieces, I yet choose to be as regular in this particular as I can, I have therefore displaced half a stanza, for the sake of introducing better. You will observe that I have made some other corrections, which though they be for the most part but a letter or a stop, were yet such as were very necessary either with regard to the expression or the sense.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant, W^M. COWPER.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 2, 1782.

Though I value your correspondence highly on its own account, I certainly value it the more in consideration of the many difficulties under which you carry it on. Having so many other engagements, and engagements so much more worthy of your attention, I ought to esteem it, as I do, a singular proof of your friendship, that you so often make an opportunity to bestow a letter upon me: and this, not only because mine, which I write in a state of mind not very favourable to religious contemplations, are never worth your reading, but especially because, while you consult my gratification and endeavour to amuse my melancholy, your thoughts are forced out of the only channel in which they delight to flow, and constrained into another so different and so little interesting to a mind like yours, that but for me, and for my sake, they would perhaps never visit it. Though I should be glad therefore to hear from you every week, I do not complain that I enjoy that privilege but once in a fortnight, but am rather happy to be indulged in it so often.

I thank you for the jog you gave Johnson's elbow; communicated from him to the printer it has produced me two more sheets, and two more will bring the business, I suppose, to a conclusion. I sometimes feel such a perfect indifference with respect to the public opinion of my book, that I am ready to flatter myself no censure of reviewers, or other critical readers, would occasion me the smallest disturbance. But not

eeling myself constantly possessed of this desirable apathy, am sometimes apt to suspect, that it is not altogether sincere, r at least that I may lose it just in the moment when I may appen most to want it. Be it however as it may, I am till persuaded that it is not in their power to mortify me uch. I have intended well, and performed to the best of my bility;—so far was right, and this is a boast of which they annot rob me. If they condemn my poetry, I must even say ith Cervantes, "Let them do better if they can!"—if my octrine, they judge that which they do not understand; I hall except to the jurisdiction of the court, and plead, *Coram on judice.* Even Horace could say, he should neither be he plumper for the praise, nor the leaner for the condemnation f his readers; and it will prove me wanting to myself indeed, , supported by so many sublimer considerations than he was aster of, I cannot sit loose to popularity, which, like the ind, bloweth where it listeth, and is equally out of our comand. If you, and two or three more such as you, say, well one! it ought to give me more contentment than if I could arn Churchill's laurels, and by the same means.

Mr. Raban has spent an hour with us since he received our last, but did not mention it. We are not of his privy ouncil. He knows our sentiments upon some subjects too ell to favour us with a very intimate place in his confidence. Ie is civil, indeed at least not intentionally otherwise, and this all we can say of him. Some people in our circumstances ould hardly say so much. As soon as he is seated, he tretches out his legs at their full length, crosses his feet, olds his arms, reclines his head upon his shoulder, yawns equently, seems not unwilling to hear and to be entertained, ut never opens a subject himself, or assists the conversation ith any remarks. This is not always pleasing.

* * * * *

George Mayne, whom I suppose you remember, a farmer hat lived on the beautiful side of a hill in Weston parish, ied last week. If you recollect the man, you recollect too hat he made it his principal glory to believe that he and his wo mastiffs would come to one and the same conclusion, and hat no part of either would survive the grave. Mr. Page ttended him, preached his funeral sermon, and informed the argest congregation ever seen at Weston that he converted

him. I cannot learn however that any competent judge of the matter has given the tale a moment's credit, or that any better proof of this wonder has been produced, than that poor George desired to be buried in his pew, to make some amends I suppose for having never visited it while he lived.

* * * * *

Yours, my dear sir, W. C.

[Parts of this letter have perished.]

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 9, 1782.

I THANK you for Mr. Lowth's verses. They are so good, that had I been present when he spoke them, I should have trembled for the boy, lest the man should disappoint the hopes such early genius had given birth to. It is not common to see so lively a fancy so correctly managed, and so free from irregular exuberances, at so unexperienced an age; fruitful, yet not wanton, and gay without being tawdry. When schoolboys write verse, if they have any fire at all, it generally spends itself in flashes, and transient sparks, which may indeed suggest an expectation of something better hereafter, but deserve not to be much commended for any real merit of their own. Their wit is generally forced and false, and their sublimity, if they affect any, bombast. I remember well when it was thus with me, and when a turgid, noisy, unmeaning speech in a tragedy, which I should now laugh at, afforded me raptures, and filled me with wonder. It is not in general till reading and observation have settled the taste, that we can give the prize to the best writing, in preference to the worst. Much less are we able to execute what is good ourselves. But Lowth seems to have stepped into excellence at once, and to have gained by intuition, what we little folks are happy, if we can learn at last, after much labour of our own, and instruction of others. The compliments he pays to the memory of King Charles, he would probably now retract, though he be a Bishop, and his Majesty's zeal for episcopacy was one of the causes of his ruin. An age or two must pass, before some characters can be properly understood. The spirit of party employs itself in veiling their faults, and ascribing to them virtues which they never possessed. See Charles's face drawn by Clarendon, and it is a handsome portrait. See it

more justly exhibited by Mrs. Macaulay, and it is deformed to a degree that shocks us. Every feature expresses cunning, employing itself in the attainment of tyranny and dissimulation, pretending itself an advocate for truth.

I have a piece of secret history to communicate which I would have imparted sooner, but that I thought it possible there might be no occasion to mention it at all. When persons for whom I have felt a friendship, disappoint and mortify me by their conduct, or act unjustly towards me, though I no longer esteem them friends, I still feel that tenderness for their character that I would conceal the blemish if I could. But in making known the following anecdote to you, I run no risk of a publication, assured that when I have once enjoined you secrecy, you will observe it.

My letters have already apprized you of that close and intimate connexion that took place between the lady you visited in Queen Ann Street, and us. Nothing could be more promising, though sudden in the commencement. She treated us with as much unreservedness of communication, as if we had been born in the same house, and educated together. At her departure, she herself proposed a correspondence, and because writing does not agree with your mother, proposed a correspondence with me. This sort of intercourse had not been long maintained, before I discovered, by some slight intimations of it, that she had conceived displeasure at somewhat I had written, though I cannot now recollect it: conscious of none but the most upright inoffensive intentions, I yet apologised for the passage in question, and the flaw was healed again. Our correspondence after this proceeded smoothly for a considerable time, but at length having had repeated occasion to observe that she expressed a sort of romantic idea of our merits, and built such expectations of felicity upon our friendship, as we were sure that nothing human could possibly answer, I wrote to remind her that we were mortal, to recommend it to her not to think more highly of us than the subject would warrant, and intimating that when we embellish a creature with colours taken from our own fancy, and so adorned, admire and praise it beyond its real merits, we make it an idol, and have nothing to expect in the end, but that it will deceive our hopes, and that we shall derive nothing from it but a painful conviction of our error. Your mother heard me

read the letter, she read it herself, and honoured it with her warm approbation. But it gave mortal offence; it received indeed an answer, but such an one as I could by no means reply to; and there ended (for it was impossible it should ever be renewed) a friendship that bid fair to be lasting; being formed with a woman whose seeming stability of temper, whose knowledge of the world, and great experience of its folly, but above all, whose sense of religion, and seriousness of mind, (for with all that gaiety, she is a great thinker,) induced us both, in spite of that cautious reserve that marks our characters, to trust her, to love and value her, and to open our hearts for her reception. It may be necessary to add, that by her own desire I wrote to her under the assumed relation of a brother, and she to me as my sister.—*Ceu fumus in auras.*

I thank you for the search you have made after my intended motto, but I no longer need it. I have left myself no room for politics, that subject therefore must be postponed to a future letter. Our love is always with yourself and family. We have recovered from the concern we suffered on account of the fracas above mentioned, though for some days it made us unhappy. Not knowing but that she might possibly become sensible in a few days that she had acted hastily and unreasonably, and renew the correspondence herself, I could not in justice apprize you of this quarrel sooner, but some weeks having passed without any proposals of accommodation, I am now persuaded that none are intended, and in justice to you am obliged to caution you against a repetition of your visit.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 16, 1782.

LEST the grumbling strain of my last should have an effect upon you which I did not intend, and occasion you another journey to Johnson's in order that you might inspire him with a little more alacrity in his work, I now write to inform you that he has, for the present at least, silenced all my complaints, by sending me the whole book except the two last sheets, which he gives me reason to expect to-morrow. When I have returned the parcel, which I mean to do by the diligence on Monday, this tedious business, so far as I am concerned in it, will be over; nothing more will then be requisite but to

keep the press going till the number he designs are printed, which I suppose will demand no great length of time, as I have heard that the expedition with which they can work off a book, when the press is once set, is wonderful.

Caraccioli says—"There is something very bewitching in authorship, and that he who has once written will write again." It may be so—I can subscribe to the former part of his assertion from my own experience, having never found an amusement, among the many I have been obliged to have recourse to, that so well answered the purpose for which I used it. The quieting and composing effect of it was such, and so totally absorbed have I sometimes been in my rhyming occupation, that neither the past nor the future, (those themes which to me are so fruitful in regret at other times,) had any longer a share in my contemplation. For this reason I wish, and have often wished since the fit left me, that it would seize me again; but hitherto I have wished it in vain. I see no want of subjects, but I feel a total disability to discuss them. Whether it is thus with other writers, or not, I am ignorant, but I should suppose my case in this respect a little peculiar. The voluminous writers at least, whose vein of fancy seems always to have been rich in proportion to their occasions, cannot have been so unlike, and so unequal to themselves. There is this difference between my poetship and the generality of *them*,—they have been ignorant how much they have stood indebted to an Almighty power, for the exercise of those talents they have supposed their own; whereas I know, and know most perfectly, and am perhaps to be taught it to the last, that my power to think, whatever it be, and consequently my power to compose, is, as much as my outward form, afforded to me by the same hand that makes me in any respect to differ from a brute. This lesson if not constantly inculcated might perhaps be forgotten, or at least too slightly remembered,—an evil of which I am in no danger; for if all that ancient mythologists have invented of a forked hill, a fountain, a god of verse, and his verse inspiring—*cætera desunt.* W. C.

[Part of this letter has been torn off.]

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Feb. 24, 1782.

If I should receive a letter from you to-morrow, you must

still remember that I am not in your debt, having paid you by anticipation.—Knowing that you take an interest in my publication, and that you have waited for it with some impatience, I write to inform you that, if it is possible for a printer to be punctual, I shall come forth on the first of March. I have ordered two copies to Stock; one for Mr. John Unwin.—It is possible after all, that my book may come forth without a Preface. Mr. Newton has written, (he could indeed write no other,) a very sensible as well as a very friendly one; and it is printed. But the bookseller, who knows him well, and esteems him highly, is anxious to have it cancelled, and with my consent first obtained, has offered to negotiate that matter with the author. He judges, that, though it would serve to recommend the volume to the religious, it would disgust the profane, and that there is in reality no need of any Preface at all. I have found Johnson a very judicious man on other occasions, and am therefore willing that he should determine for me upon this.

Having imparted to you an account of the fracas between us and Lady Austen, it is necessary that you should be made acquainted with every event that bears any relation to that incident. The day before yesterday she sent me, by her brother-in-law, Mr. Jones, three pair of worked ruffles, with advice that I should soon receive a fourth. I knew they were begun before we quarrelled. I begged Mr. Jones to tell her when he wrote next, how much I thought myself obliged, and gave him to understand that I should make her a very inadequate, though the only return in my power, by laying my volume at her feet. This likewise she had previous reason given to expect. Thus stands the affair at present; whether any thing in the shape of a reconciliation is to take place hereafter, I know not; but this I know, that when an amicable freedom of intercourse, and that unreserved confidence which belongs only to true friendship, has been once unrooted, plant it again with what care you may, it is very difficult, if not impossible to make it grow. The fear of giving offence to a temper too apt to take it, is unfavourable to that comfort we propose to ourselves even in our ordinary connexions, but absolutely incompatible with the pleasures of real friendship. She is to spend the summer in our neighbourhood, Lady Peterborough and Miss Mordaunt are to be of the party; the former a dissipated woman of fashion,

and the latter a haughty beauty. Retirement is our passion and our delight; it is in still life alone we look for that measure of happiness we can rationally expect below. What have we to do therefore with characters like these? shall we go to the dancing school again? shall we cast off the simplicity of our plain and artless demeanour, to learn, and not in a youthful day neither, the manners of those whose manners at the best are their only recommendation, and yet can in reality recommend them to none, but to people like themselves? This would be folly which nothing but necessity could excuse, and in our case no such necessity can possibly obtain. We will not go into the world, and if the world would come to us, we must give it the French answer—*Monsieur et Madame ne sont pas visibles.*

There are but few persons to whom I present my book. The Lord Chancellor is one. I enclose in a packet I send by this post to Johnson a letter to his Lordship which will accompany the volume; and to you I enclose a copy of it, because I know you will have a friendly curiosity to see it. An author is an important character. Whatever his merits may be, the mere circumstance of authorship warrants his approach to persons, whom otherwise perhaps he could hardly address without being deemed impertinent. He can do me no good. If I should happen to do him a little, I shall be a greater man than he. I have ordered a copy likewise to Mr. Robert Smith.

Lord Sandwich has been hard run, but I consider the push that has been made to displace him as the effort of a faction, rather than as the struggle of true patriotism convinced of his delinquency, and desirous to sacrifice him to the interests of the country. Without public virtue public prosperity cannot be long lived, and where must we look for it? It seems indeed to have a share in the motives that animate one or two of the popular party; but grant them sincere, which is a very charitable concession, the rest are evidently naught, and the quantity of salt is too small to season the mass.

I hope John continues to be pleased, and to give pleasure. If he loves instruction, he has a tutor who can give him plentifully of what he loves; and with his natural abilities his progress must be such as you would wish. Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, February, 1782.

It is not possible for me, as it used to be, to answer a Sunday's

letter by the return of the post. It goes out before it comes in. A new and very inconvenient regulation. I am now obliged to get all my despatches ready by nine or ten in the morning. Methinks I express myself like a secretary of state.

I enclose Johnson's upon the subject of the Preface, and would send you my reply to it, if I had kept a copy. This however was the purport of it. That Mr. Bates, whom I described as you described him to me, had made a similar objection, but that being willing to hope, that two or three pages of sensible matter, well expressed, might possibly go down, though of a religious cast, I was resolved to believe him mistaken, and to pay no regard to it. That *his* judgement however, who by his occupation is bound to understand what will promote the sale of a book, and what will hinder it, seemed to deserve more attention. That therefore, according to his own offer written on a small slip of paper now lost, I should be obliged to him if he would state his difficulties to you: adding, that I need not inform *him*, who is so well acquainted with you, that he would find you easy to be persuaded to sacrifice, if necessary, what you had written, to the interests of the book. I find he has had an interview with you upon the occasion, and your behaviour in it has verified my prediction. What course he determines upon I do not know, nor am I at all anxious about it. It is impossible for me however to be so insensible of your kindness in writing the Preface, as not to be desirous of defying all contingencies rather than entertain a wish to suppress it. It will do me honour in the eyes of those whose good opinion is indeed an honour, and if it hurts me in the estimation of others, I cannot help it; the fault is neither yours nor mine, but theirs. If a minister's is a more splendid character than a poet's, and I think nobody that understands their value can hesitate in deciding that question, then undoubtedly the advantage of having our names united in the same volume is all on my side: —but to say truth, though I may find a transient amusement, I have no sincere pleasure in any thing. Sufficient care is taken by my nightly instructors that I shall not forget my whereabout. Reminded as I am continually, and always knowing it to be true, that I am a foreigner to the system I inhabit, I cannot if I would deceive myself into an opinion that I have any real interest in any thing here. I know that this persuasion would be thought sufficient

evidence of frenzy were it produced before a jury under a commission of lunacy; but it is not the less a fact, neither is it to me the least distressing part of it, that it is a fact of which I can convince nobody, because though convinced myself, it is impossible I should produce any proof of it; but let this pass—it will be known in due time.

We thank you for the Fast-sermon. I had not read two pages before I exclaimed,—The man has read Expostulation! But though there is a strong resemblance between the two pieces in point of matter, and sometimes the very same expressions are to be met with, yet I soon recollected that, on such a theme, a striking coincidence of both might happen without a wonder. I doubt not that it is the production of an honest man, it carries with it an air of sincerity and zeal, that is not easily counterfeited. But though I can see no reason why kings should not sometimes hear of their faults, as well as other men, I think I see many good ones why they should not be reproved so publicly. It can hardly be done with that respect which is due to their office, on the part of the author, or without encouraging a spirit of unmannerly censure in his readers. His majesty too perhaps might answer —"my own personal feelings and offences I am ready to confess; but were I to follow your advice, and cashier the profligate from my service, where must I seek men of faith, and true Christian piety, qualified by nature and by education to succeed them?" Business must be done, men of business alone can do it, and *good* men are rarely found under that description. When Nathan reproved David, he did not employ a herald, or accompany his charge with the sound of the trumpet; nor can I think the writer of this sermon quite justifiable in exposing the king's faults in the sight of the people.

These two last posts our news has failed us. This has occasioned our hiring one, and has given us an opportunity to discover that we can be furnished at Olney with six Morning Chronicles in the week, for three shillings and three pence a quarter. We shall be obliged to you therefore if you will pay our London newsmonger, and tell him we have no further need of him.

Daniel Raban has levelled and gravelled the market hill, and because water is scarce at Olney, has put the parish to the expense of a town pump, and designs, in order that people may not

run their heads against it in the night, to crown it with a lamp. As the people here are not so rich as to be able to afford superfluities, this measure does not give universal satisfaction. I subjoin the only verses I have written for some time, which however are not to be published. The pump stands opposite Banister's door.

> Let Banister now lend his aid
> To furnish shoes for the Baker,
> Who has put down a pump, with a lamp on its head,
> For the use of the said Shoe-maker.

Many thanks for the tongues and the nuts: one of the latter is remarkably fine. The money shall be paid as directed. I enclose a list of my gifted readers, that you may not purchase for those to whom I intend a present. I shall send Lord Dartmouth a card by the present post. We are as ever yours and Mrs. Newton's. WM. COWPER.

My coach is full. Mr. Jones cannot have a place in it till next time.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 6, 1782.

THE tempting occasion of a basket directed to you, seldom fails to produce a letter; not that I have any thing to say, but because I can say anything, therefore I seize the present opportunity to address you. Some subject will be sure to present itself, and the first that offers shall be welcome.

Is peace the nearer because our patriots have resolved that it is desirable? Will the victory they have gained in the House of Commons be attended with any other consequences than the mortification of the King, the embarrassment of ministry, and perhaps Lord North's resignation? Do they expect the same success on other occasions, and having once gained a majority, are they to be the majority for ever?——These are the questions we agitate by the fireside in an evening, without being able to come to any certain conclusion, partly I suppose because the subject is in itself uncertain, and partly because we are not furnished with the means of understanding it. I find the politics of times past far more intelligible than those of the present. Time has thrown light upon what was obscure, and decided what was ambiguous. The characters of great men, which are always mysterious while they live, are ascertained by the faithful histo-

rian, and sooner or later receive their wages of fame or infamy, according to their true deserts. How have I seen sensible and learned men burn incense to the memory of Oliver Cromwell, ascribing to him, as the greatest hero of the world, the dignity of the British empire during the interregnum. A century passed before that idol, which seemed to be of gold, was proved to be a wooden one. The fallacy however was at length detected, and the honour of that detection has fallen to the share of a woman. I do not know whether you have read Mrs. Macaulay's history of that period. She handled him more roughly than the Scots did at the battle of Dunbar, where, though he gained a victory, he received a wound in his head, that had almost made it his last, and spoiled him for a Protector. He would have thought it little worth his while to have broken through all obligations divine and human, to have wept crocodile tears, and wrapped himself up in the obscurity of speeches that nobody could understand, could he have foreseen that in the ensuing century a lady's scissors would clip his laurels close, and expose his naked villany to the scorn of all posterity. This however has been accomplished, and so effectually, that I suppose it is not in the power of the most artificial management to make them grow again. Even the sagacious of mankind are blind when Providence leaves them to be deluded; so blind, that a tyrant shall be mistaken for a true patriot, true patriots (such were the Long Parliament) shall be abhorred as tyrants, and almost a whole nation shall dream, that they have the full enjoyment of liberty, for years after such a crafty knave as Oliver shall have stolen it completely from them. I am indebted for all this show of historical knowledge to Mr. Bull, who has lent me five volumes of the work I mention. I was willing to display it while I have it; in a twelvemonth's time I shall remember almost nothing of the matter.

I wrote to Lord Dartmouth to apprize him of my intended present, and have received a very affectionate and obliging answer. But not having received the volume myself, I suppose it is not yet published, though the first of the month was the day fixed for the publication.

No winter since we knew Olney has kept us more closely confined than the present; either the ways have been so dirty or the weather so rough, that we have not more than three

times escaped into the fields since last autumn. This does not suit Mrs. Unwin, to whom air and exercise, her only remedies, are almost absolutely necessary. Neither are my frequent calls into the garden altogether sufficient for me. Man, a changeable creature himself, seems to subsist best in a state of variety, as his proper element. A melancholy man at least is apt to grow sadly weary of the same walls and the same pales, and to find that the same scene will suggest the same thoughts perpetually.

Mrs. Unwin hopes the chickens will prove good, though not so fat as she generally makes them. She has sent the two guineas for the box, and I the layers and pinks I mentioned. When the bulbs are taken up at Michaelmas, Mrs. Newton shall receive a parcel of all the sorts. Though I have spoken of the utility of changes, we neither feel nor wish for any in our friendships, and consequently stand just where we did with respect to your whole self. Other friends than you we have none, nor expect any. Yours, my dear Sir,

WM. COWPER.

The cocoa nuts were equally good, and one of the tongues proved a very fine one; we have not dressed the other.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 7, 1782.

We have great pleasure in the contemplation of your Northern journey, as it promises us a sight of you and yours by the way, and are only sorry that Miss Shuttleworth cannot be of the party. A line to ascertain the hour when we may expect you, by the next preceding post, will be welcome.

We are far from wishing a renewal of the connexion we have lately talked about. We did indeed find it in a certain way an agreeable one while that lady continued in the country, yet not altogether compatible with our favourite plan, with that silent retirement in which we have spent so many years, and in which we wish to spend what are yet before us. She is exceedingly sensible, has great quickness of parts, and an uncommon fluency of expression, but her vivacity was sometimes too much for us; occasionally perhaps it might refresh and revive us, but it more frequently exhausted us, neither your mother nor I being in that respect at all a match for her. But *after* all, it does not entirely depend upon us, whether our

former intimacy shall take place again or not; or rather whether we shall attempt to cultivate it, or give it over, as we are most inclined to do, in despair. I suspect a little by her sending the ruffles, and by the terms in which she spoke of us to you, that some overtures on her part are to be looked for. Should this happen, however we may wish to be reserved, we must not be rude; but I can answer for us both, that we shall enter into the connexion again with great reluctance, not hoping for any better fruit of it than it has already produced. If you thought she fell short of the description I gave of her, I still think however that it was not a partial one, and that it did not make too favourable a representation of her character. You *must* have seen her to a disadvantage; a consciousness of a quarrel so recent, and in which she had expressed herself with a warmth that she knew must have affronted and shocked us both, must unavoidably have produced its effect upon her behaviour, which though it could not be awkward, must have been in some degree unnatural, her attention being necessarily pretty much engrossed by a recollection of what had passed between us. I would by no means have hazarded you into her company, if I had not been sure that she would treat you with politeness, and almost persuaded that she would soon see the unreasonableness of her conduct, and make a suitable apology.

It is not much for my advantage, that the printer delays so long to gratify your expectation. It is a state of mind that is apt to tire and disconcert us; and there are but few pleasures that make us amends for the pain of repeated disappointment. I take it for granted you have not received the volume, not having received it myself, nor indeed heard from Johnson, since he fixed the first of the month for its publication.

What a medley are our public prints, half the page filled with the ruin of the country, and the other half filled with the vices and pleasures of it;—here an island taken, and there a new comedy;—here an empire lost, and there an Italian opera, or the Duke of Gloucester's rout on a Sunday!

"May it please your R. H.! I am an Englishman, and must stand or fall with the nation. Religion, its true Palladium, has been stolen away; and it is crumbling into dust. Sin ruins us, the sins of the great especially, and of their sins especially the violation of the sabbath, because it is naturally productive of

all the rest. Is it fit that a Prince should make the sabbath a day of dissipation, and that not content with his own personal profanation of it, he should invite all whose rank entitles them to the honour of such distinction, to partake with him in his guilt? Are examples operative in proportion to the dignity of those who set them? Whose then more pernicious than your own in this flagrant instance of impiety? For shame, Sir!—if you wish well to your brother's arms, and would be glad to see the kingdom emerging again from her ruins, pay more respect to an ordinance that deserves the deepest! I do not say pardon this short remonstance;——The concern I feel for my country, and the interest I have in its prosperity, give me a right to make it. I am, &c."

Thus one might write to his Highness, and (I suppose) might be as profitably employed in whistling the tune of an old ballad. Lord P——— had a rout too on the same day.—Is he the son of that P———, who bought Punch for a hundred pounds, and having kept him a week, tore him limb from limb becuse he was sullen and would not speak?—Probably he is.

I have no copy of the Preface, nor do I know at present how Johnson and Mr. Newton have settled it. In the matter of it there was nothing offensively peculiar. But it was thought too pious. Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 14, 1782.

I CAN only repeat what I said some time since, that the world is grown more foolish and careless than it was when I had the honour of knowing it. Though your Preface was of a serious cast, it was yet free from every thing that might, with propriety, expose it to the charge of Methodism, being guilty of no offensive peculiarities, nor containing any of those obnoxious doctrines at which the world is so apt to be angry, and which we must give her leave to be angry at, because we know she cannot help it. It asserted nothing more than every rational creature must admit to be true,—"that divine and earthly things can no longer stand in competition with each other, in the judgement of any man, than while he continues ignorant of their respective value: and that the moment the eyes are opened, the latter are always cheerfully relinquished for the sake of the former." Now I do most certainly remember the time when such a pro-

position as this would have been at least supportable, and when it would not have spoiled the market of any volume to which it had been prefixed; *ergo*—the times are altered for the worse.

I have reason to be very much satisfied with my publisher. He marked such lines as did not please him, and as often I could, I paid all possible respect to his animadversions. You will accordingly find, at least if you recollect how they stood in the MS., that several passages are the better for having undergone his critical notice. Indeed I do not know where I could have found a bookseller who could have pointed out to me my defects with more discernment; and as I find it is a fashion for modern bards to publish the names of the literati who have favoured their works with a revisal, would myself most willingly have acknowledged my obligations to Johnson, and so I told him. I am to thank you likewise, and ought to have done it in the first place, for having recommended to me the suppression of some lines, which I am now more than ever convinced would at least have done me no honour.

I was not unacquainted with Mr. Browne's extraordinary case, before you favoured me with his letter and his intended dedication to the Queen, though I am obliged to you for a sight of those two curiosities, which I do not recollect to have ever seen till you sent them. I could, however, were it not a subject that would make us all melancholy, point out to you some essential differences between his state of mind and my own, which would prove mine to be by far the most deplorable of the two. I suppose no man would despair, if he did not apprehend something singular in the circumstances of his own story, something that discriminates it from that of every other man, and that induces despair as an inevitable consequence. You may encounter his unhappy persuasion with as many instances as you please, of persons who, like him, having renounced all hope, were yet restored; and may thence infer that he, like them, shall meet with a season of restoration—but it is in vain. Every such individual accounts himself an exception to all rules, and therefore the blessed reverse, that others have experienced, affords no ground of comfortable expectation to *him*. But you will say, it is reasonable to conclude that as all your predecessors in this vale of misery and horror have found themselves delightfully disappointed at last, so will

you:—I grant the reasonableness of it; it would be sinful, perhaps, because uncharitable, to reason otherwise; but an argument, hypothetical in its nature, however rationally conducted, may lead to a false conclusion; and in this instance so will yours. But I forbear. For the cause above mentioned, I will say no more, though it is a subject on which I could write more than the mail would carry. I must deal with you as I deal with poor Mrs. Unwin, in all our disputes about it, cutting all controversy short by an appeal to the event.

MY DEAR MADAM,

We return you many thanks, in the first place for a pot of scallops excellently pickled, and in the second for the snuff-box. We admired it, even when we supposed the price of it two guineas; guess then with what raptures we contemplated it when we found that it cost but one. It was genteel before, but then it became a perfect model of elegance, and worthy to be the desire of all noses.

Your own hams not being dry, Mrs. Unwin begs your acceptance of one of hers, together with a couple of fowls, and would have sent some brocoli, but has none—a reason for not sending it, which, however to be lamented, must yet be allowed a satisfactory one. Dear Madam,

We are yours and Sir's most
Affectionately and truly
WM. C. AND M. U.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 14, 1782.

As servant maids, and such sort of folks, account a letter good for nothing, unless it begins with—This comes hoping you are well, as I am at this present: so I should be chargeable with a great omission, were I not to make frequent use of the following grateful exordium—Many thanks for a fine cod and oysters.—Your bounty never arrived more seasonably. I had just been observing that among other deplorable effects of the war, the scarcity of fish which it occasioned, was severely felt at Olney; but your plentiful supply immediately reconciled me, though not to the war, yet to my small share in the calamities it produces.

I hope my bookseller has paid due attention to the order I

gave him to furnish you with my books. The composition of those pieces afforded me an agreeable amusement at intervals, for about a twelvemonth; and I should be glad to devote the leisure hours of another twelvemonth to the same occupation; at least, if my lucubrations should meet with a favourable acceptance. But I cannot write when I would; and whether I shall find readers, is a problem not yet decided. So the Muse and I are parted for the present.

I sent Lord Thurlow a volume, and a letter with it, which I communicate because you will undoubtedly have some curiosity to see it. Yours, W^M^. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, March 18, 1782.

NOTHING has given me so much pleasure, since the publication of my volume, as your favourable opinion of it. It may possibly meet with acceptance from hundreds, whose commendation would afford me no other satisfaction than what I should find in the hope that it might do them good. I have some neighbours in this place, who say they like it;—doubtless I had rather they should than that they should not,—but I know them to be persons of no more taste in poetry, than skill in the mathematics; their applause therefore is a sound that has no music in it for me. But my vanity was not so entirely quiescent when I read your friendly account of the manner in which it had affected *you*. It was tickled, and pleased, and told me in a pretty loud whisper, that others perhaps of whose taste and judgement I had a high opinion, would approve it too. As a giver of good counsel, I wish to please all;—as an author, I am perfectly indifferent to the judgement of all, except the few who are indeed judicious. The circumstance however in your letter which pleased me most was, that you wrote in high spirits, and though you said much, suppressed more, lest you should hurt my delicacy; my delicacy is obliged to you,—but you observe it is not so squeamish, but that after it has feasted upon praise expressed, it can find a comfortable dessert in the contemplation of praise implied. I now feel as if I should be glad to begin another volume, but from the will to the power is a step too wide for me to take at present, and the season of the year brings with it so many avocations into the garden, where I am my own fac totum,

that I have little or no leisure for the quill. I should do myself much wrong, were I to omit mentioning the great complacency with which I read your narrative of Mrs. Unwin's smiles and tears; persons of much sensibility are always persons of taste; a taste for poetry depends indeed upon that very article more than upon any other. If she had Aristotle by heart, I should not esteem her judgement so highly, were she defective in point of feeling, as I do and must esteem it, knowing her to have such feelings as Aristotle could not communicate, and as half the readers in the world are destitute of. This it is that makes me set so high a price upon your mother's opinion. She is a critic by nature, and not by rule, and has a perception of what is good or bad in composition, that I never knew deceive her; insomuch, that when two sorts of expression have pleaded equally for the preference in my own esteem, and I have referred, as in such cases I always did, the decision of the point to her, I never knew her at a loss for a just one.

Whether I shall receive any answer from his Chancellorship or not, is at present *in ambiguo*, and will probably continue in the same state of ambiguity much longer. He is so busy a man, and at this time, if the papers may be credited, so particularly busy, that I am forced to mortify myself with the thought, that both my book and my letter may be thrown into a corner as too insignificant for a statesman's notice, and never found till his executor finds them. This affair however is neither *ad* my *libitum* nor his. I have sent him the truth, and the truth which I know he is ignorant of. He that put it into the heart of a certain eastern monarch, to amuse himself one sleepless night with listening to the records of his kingdom, is able to give birth to such another occasion in Lord Thurlow's instance, and inspire him with a curiosity to know what he has received from a friend he once loved and valued. If an answer comes however, you shall not long be a stranger to the contents of it.

I have read your letter to their Worships, and much approve of it. May it have the effect it ought! If not, still you have acted an humane and becoming part, and the poor aching toes and fingers of the prisoners will not appear in judgement against you. I have made a slight alteration in the last sentence, which perhaps you will not disapprove.

Yours ever, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR SIR, March 24, 1782.

If you had only commended me as a poet, I should have swallowed your praises whole, have smacked my lips, and made no reply; but as you offer me your friendship, and account me worthy of your affection, which I esteem a much greater honour than that of being a poet, though even approved by you, it seems necessary that I should not be quite dumb upon so interesting an occasion.

Your letter gave me great pleasure, both as a testimony of your approbation, and of your regard. I wrote in hopes of pleasing you, and such as you; and though I must confess that, at the same time, I cast a side-long glance at the good liking of the world at large, I believe I can say it was more for the sake of their advantage and instruction than their praise. They are children: if we give them physic, we must sweeten the rim of the cup with honey. If my book is so far honoured as to be made a vehicle of true knowledge to any that are ignorant, I shall rejoice; and do already rejoice that it has procured me a proof of your esteem, whom I had rather please than all the writers of both Reviews.

When your leisure and your health will allow you to trot over to Olney, you will most assuredly be welcome to us both, and even welcome if you please to light your pipe with the page in question.

Yours, my dear friend, affectionately, WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR SIR, Tuesday morning.

Behold the plan of your future operations! which, as I have told Mr. Newton, the man being found who is able to carry it into practice, ought not to be called Utopian. It must be returned to London in the course of the next ten days, by you if you have opportunity to send it; if not, by me. In the latter case you will be so kind as to remit it to Olney in due season.

I have loaded Mr. Dunville with your books, and return you many thanks for the use of them. Mr. Milner's gave me great pleasure, as a sensible, just, and temperate piece of argument. I only regret that, having it in his power to be perfectly correct in his expression, he should suffer any inaccuracies to escape him. Such mistakes in an advocate for the truth, however

venial in others, are sure to be marked by the critics, and magnified to the disadvantage of his cause.

I heartily wish you many comfortable whiffs to-day, and every day, especially when you come to whiff in the greenhouse. Yours, WM. C.

TO THE REV. W. UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, April 1, 1782.

I COULD not have found a better trumpeter. Your zeal to serve the interest of my volume, together with your extensive acquaintance, qualify you perfectly for that most useful office. Methinks I see you with the long tube at your mouth, proclaiming to your numerous connexions my poetical merits, and at proper intervals levelling it at Olney, and pouring into my ear the welcome sound of their approbation. I need not encourage you to proceed, your breath will never fail in such a cause; and thus encouraged, I myself perhaps may proceed also, and when the versifying fit returns produce another volume. Alas! we shall never receive such commendations from him on the woolsack, as your good friend has lavished upon us. He has great abilities, but no religion. Mr. Hill told him some time since that I was going to publish; to which piece of information, so far as I can learn, he returned no answer; for Mr. Hill has not reported any to me. He had afterwards an opportunity to converse with him in private, but my poor authorship was not so much as mentioned: whence I learn two lessons; first, that however important I may be in my own eyes, I am very insignificant in his, and secondly, that I am never likely to receive any acknowledgement of the favour I have conferred upon his lordship, either under his own hand, or by the means of a third person; and consequently that our intercourse has ceased for ever, for I shall not have such another opportunity to renew it. To make me amends however for this mortification, Mr. Newton tells me, that my book is likely to run, spread, and prosper; that the grave cannot help smiling, and the gay are struck with the truth of it; and that it is likely to find its way into his Majesty's hands, being put into a proper course for that purpose. Now if the King should fall in love with my Muse, and with you for her sake, such an event would make us ample amends for the Chancellor's *indifference*, and you might be the first divine that ever reached

a mitre from the shoulders of a poet. But, I believe, we must be content, I with my gains, if I gain any thing, and you with the pleasure of knowing that I am a gainer.

Doubt not your abilities for the task which Johnson would recommend to you. The Reviewers are such fiery Socinians that they have less charity for a man of my avowed principles than a Portuguese for a Jew. They may possibly find here and there somewhat to commend, but will undoubtedly reprobate the doctrines, pronounce me a methodist, and by so doing probably check the sale of the volume, if not suppress it. Wherein consists your difficulty? Your private judgement once made public, and the world made acquainted with what you think and what you feel while you read me by the fireside, the business is done, I am reviewed, and my book forwarded in its progress by a judicious recommendation. In return, write a book, and I will be your reviewer; thus we may hold up each other to public admiration, and turn our friendship to good account. But seriously, I think you perfectly qualified for the undertaking; and if you have no other objection to it than what arises from self-distrust, am persuaded you need only make the experiment in order to confute yourself.

We laughed heartily at your reply to little John's question; and yet I think you might have given him a direct answer—"There are various sorts of cleverness, my dear; I do not know that mine lies in the poetical way, but I can do ten times more towards the entertainment of company in the way of conversation than our friend at Olney. He can rhyme, and I can rattle. If he had my talent, and I had his, we should be too charming, and the world would almost adore us."

I have sowed sallad, in hopes that you will eat it; I have already cut cucumbers, but have no fruit growing at present. Spring onions in abundance. We shall be happy to see you, and hope that nothing will intervene to shorten your stay with us. Our love is with you both, and with all your family. *Bon voyage!* Yours, W^M^. COWPER.

If your short stay in town will afford you an opportunity, I should be glad if you would buy me a genteelish toothpick case. I shall not think half a guinea too much for it; only it must be one that will not easily break. If second-hand, perhaps, it may be the better.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN, AT THE REV. MATTHEW POWLEY'S, DEWSBURY, NEAR WAKEFIELD.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, April 27, 1782.

A PART of Lord Harrington's new-raised corps have taken up their quarters at Olney since you left us. They have the regimental music with them. The men have been drawn up this morning upon the Market-hill, and a concert, such as we have not heard these many years, has been performed at no great distance from our window. Your mother and I both thrust our heads into the coldest east wind that ever blew in April, that we might hear them to greater advantage. The band acquitted themselves with taste and propriety, not *blairing*, like trumpeters at a fair, but producing gentle and elegant symphony, such as charmed our ears, and convinced us that no length of time can wear out a taste for harmony; and that though plays, balls, and masquerades have lost all their power to please us, and we should find them not only insipid but insupportable, yet sweet music is sure to find a corresponding faculty in the soul, a sensibility that lives to the last, which even religion itself does not extinguish. I must pity therefore some good people, (at least some who once were thought such,) who have been fiddled out of all their Christian profession; and having forsaken the world for a time, have danced into it again with all their might. It is a snare from which I myself should find it difficult to escape, were I much in the way of it.

When we objected to your coming for a single night, it was only in the way of argument, and in hopes to prevail with you to contrive a longer abode with us. But rather than not see you at all, we should be glad of you though but for an hour. If the paths would be clean enough, and we are able to walk, (for you know we cannot ride,) we will endeavour to meet you in Weston Park. But I mention no particular hour, that I may not lay you under a supposed obligation to be punctual, which might be difficult at the end of so long a journey. Only if the weather be favourable, you shall find us there in the evening. It is winter in the south, perhaps therefore it may be spring at least, if not summer, in the north: for I have read that it is warmest in Greenland when it is coldest here. Be that as it may, we may hope at the latter end of such an April that the first change of wind will improve the season.

We truly sympathized with you in the distresses you found on the northern side of Wakefield. It is well that the fatigue and the fright together were not too much for Mrs. Unwin. What a boor was he you mention! Cursed is he, says the Scripture, that turneth the blind out of his way,.. a curse that, for aught I know, is fierce enough to singe the beard at least of the wretch who refuses to turn the wanderer into it. You will probably preach at Dewsbury the last Sunday, and if you see this dealer in light money, and this uncivilized savage in the congregation, perhaps you may contrive to tell him so.

The curate's simile Latinized:—

Sors adversa gerit stimulum, sed tendit et alas;
Pungit, api similis, sed, velut ista, fugit.

What a dignity there is in the Roman language! and what an idea it gives us of the good sense and masculine mind of the people that spoke it! The same thought which clothed in English seems childish, and even foolish, assumes a different air in Latin, and makes at least as good an epigram as some of Martial's.

I remember your making an observation, while here, on the subject of parentheses, to which I acceded without limitation; but a little attention will convince us both, that they are not to be universally condemned. When they abound, and when they are long, they both embarrass the sense, and are a proof that the writer's head is cloudy, that he has not properly arranged his matter, or is not well skilled in the graces of expression. But as parenthesis is ranked by grammarians among the figures of rhetoric, we may suppose they had a reason for conferring that honour upon it. Accordingly we shall find that in the use of some of our finest writers, as well as in the hands of the ancient poets and orators, it has a peculiar elegance, and imparts a beauty which the period would want without it.

"*Hoc nemus, hunc,*" *inquit*, "*frondoso vertice collem*
(Quis deus incertum est) habitat deus."—VIR. Æn. 8.

In this instance, the first that occurred, it is graceful. I have not time to seek for more, nor room to insert them. But your own observation I believe will confirm my opinion. We have thought of you and talked of you every day since you went, and shall till you return. Our love attends yourself and Mrs. Unwin, John the hider of a tea-kettle not yet found, and your hosts at Dewsbury. Yours ever, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May 27, 1782.

RATHER ashamed of having been at all dejected by the censure of the Critical Reviewers, who certainly could not read without prejudice a book replete with opinions and doctrines to which they cannot subscribe, I have at present no little occasion to keep a strict guard upon my vanity, lest it should be too much flattered by the following eulogium. I send it you for the reasons I gave when I imparted to you some other anecdotes of a similar kind, while we were together. Our interests in the success of this same volume are so closely united, that you *must* share with me in the praise or blame that attends it; and sympathizing with me under the burthen of injurious treatment, have a right to enjoy with me the cordials I now and then receive, as I happen to meet with more favourable and candid judges.

A merchant, a friend of ours, (you will soon guess him,) sent my Poems to one of the first philosophers, one of the most eminent literary characters, as well as one of the most important in the political world, that the present age can boast of. Now perhaps your conjecturing faculties are puzzled, and you begin to ask, "who, where, and what is he? speak out, for I am all impatience." I will not say a word more, the letter in which he returned his thanks for the present shall speak for him.

SIR, Passy, May 8, 1782.

I received the letter you did me the honour of writing to me, and am much obliged by your kind present of a book. The relish for reading of poetry had long since left me, but there is something so new in the manner, so easy, and yet so correct in the language, so clear in the expression, yet concise, and so just in the sentiments, that I have read the whole with great pleasure, and some of the pieces more than once. I beg you to accept my thankful acknowledgments, and to present my respects to the author.

I shall take care to forward the letters to America, and shall be glad of any other opportunity of doing what may be agreeable to you, being with great respect for your character,

Your most obedient humble servant, B. FRANKLIN.

We may now treat the critics as the Archbishop of Toledo

treated Gil Blas, when he found fault with one of his sermons. His grace gave him a kick, and said, "Begone for a jackanapes, and furnish yourself with a better taste, if you know where to find it."

We are glad that you are safe at home again. Could we see at one glance of the eye what is passing every day upon all the roads in the kingdom, how many are terrified and hurt, how many plundered and abused, we should indeed find reason enough to be thankful for journeys performed in safety, and for deliverance from dangers we are not perhaps even permitted to see. When in some of the high southern latitudes, and in a dark tempestuous night, a flash of lightning discovered to Captain Cook a vessel, which glanced along close by his side, and which, but for the lightning, he must have run foul of, both the danger, and the transient light that showed it, were undoubtedly designed to convey to him this wholesome instruction, that a particular Providence attended him, and that he was not only preserved from evils, of which he had notice, but from many more of which he had no information, or even the least suspicion. What unlikely contingencies may nevertheless take place! How improbable that two ships should dash against each other, in the midst of the vast Pacific Ocean, and that steering contrary courses, from parts of the world so immensely distant from each other, they should yet move so exactly in a line as to clash, fill, and go to the bottom, in a sea where all the ships in the world might be so dispersed as that none should see another! Yet this must have happened but for the remarkable interference which he has recorded. The same Providence indeed might as easily have conducted them so wide of each other, that they should never have met at all; but then this lesson would have been lost; at least, the heroic voyager would have encompassed the globe without having had occasion to relate an incident that so naturally suggests it.

I am no more delighted with the season than you are. The absence of the sun, which has graced the spring with much less of his presence than he vouchsafed to the winter, has a very uncomfortable effect upon my frame. I feel an invincible aversion to employment, which I am yet constrained to fly to as my only remedy against something worse. If I do nothing, I am dejected; if I do any thing, I am weary; and that weari-

ness is best described by the word lassitude, which is of all weariness in the world the most oppressive. But enough of myself and the weather.

The blow we have struck in the West Indies will, I suppose, be decisive at least for the present year, and so far as that part of our possessions is concerned in the present conflict. But the news-writers, and their correspondents, disgust me, and make me sick. One victory after such a long series of adverse occurrences has filled them with self-conceit, and impertinent boasting; and while Rodney is almost accounted a methodist for ascribing his success to Providence, men who have renounced all dependence upon such a friend, without whose assistance nothing can be done, threaten to drive the French out of the sea, laugh at the Spaniards, sneer at the Dutch, and are to carry the world before them. Our enemies are apt to brag, and we deride them for it; but we can sing as loud as they can, in the same key, and no doubt wherever our papers go, shall be derided in our turn. An Englishman's true glory should be, to do his business well, and say little about it; but he disgraces himself when he puffs his prowess as if he had finished his task, when he has but just begun it.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, June 12, 1782.

EVERY extraordinary occurrence in our lives affords us an opportunity to learn, if we will, something more of our own hearts and tempers than we were before aware of. It is easy to promise ourselves beforehand, that our conduct shall be wise, or moderate, or resolute, on any given occasion. But when that occasion occurs, we do not always find it easy to make good the promise: such a difference there is between theory and practice. Perhaps this is no new remark; but it is not a whit the worse for being old, if it be true.

Before I had published, I said to myself—You and I, Mr. Cowper, will not concern ourselves much about what the critics may say of our book. But having once sent my wits for a venture, I soon became anxious about the issue, and found that I could not be satisfied with a warm place in my own good graces, unless my friends were pleased with me as much as I pleased myself. Meeting with their approbation, I began to feel the

workings of ambition. It is well, said I, that my friends are pleased, but friends are sometimes partial, and mine, I have reason to think, are not altogether free from bias: methinks I should like to hear a stranger or two speak well of me. I was presently gratified by the approbation of the London Magazine, and the Gentleman's, particularly by that of the former, and by the plaudit of Dr. Franklin. By the way, magazines are publications we have but little respect for, till we ourselves are chronicled in them, and then they assume an importance in our esteem which before we could not allow them. But the Monthly Review, the most formidable of all my judges, is still behind. What will that critical Radamanthus say, when my shivering genius shall appear before him? Still he keeps me in hot water, and I must wait another month for his award. Alas! when I wish for a favourable sentence from that quarter, (to confess a weakness that I should not confess to all,) I feel myself not a little influenced by a tender regard to my reputation here, even among my neighbours at Olney. Here are watch-makers, who themselves are wits, and who at present perhaps think me one. Here is a carpenter, and a baker, and not to mention others, here is your idol Mr Teedon, whose smile is fame. All these read the Monthly Review, and all these will set me down for a dunce, if those terrible critics show them the example. But oh! wherever else I am accounted dull, dear Mr. Griffith, let me pass for a genius at Olney!

I am glad that Mr. Madan is pleased, and obliged to him for his intercession with Dodsley: 'tis more than I expected. I wish he would publish something that I could approve of in return; but if he does it must be on some other subject. Had he given an answer, though but a specious one, to the criticisms of the Monthly Review, his perseverance would stand less in need of an excuse: but having hitherto left unnoticed objections that strike at the very root of his project, though most provokingly challenged to refute them if he can, and still persisting in his design, he deserves less to be pitied as a man deceived, than blamed as an obstinate one. What is that quotation from Josephus, or how can it be applied to his purpose? Does it prove that the *converted* Jews were polygamists? No such matter; it has therefore nothing to do with his argument. As little, in my mind, is he assisted by the remark he makes on the 19th of Matthew. "Christ did not condemn; therefore

he approved:" to which I reply, *non valet consequentia:* ten thousand enormities prevailed in his day, which he did not condemn by name, but he did not therefore authorize the least of them. And is it not a strange supposition that He should leave his disciples ignorant of what Mr. Madan accounts so great a privilege for eighteen centuries, and at last raise up the gentleman in question to restore it, and him so little qualified after all for the purpose, that he cannot support his doctrine? The Spirit was promised, and the Spirit in due time was given, to lead his disciples into all truth: and the history of the Christian Church proves from the beginning to the present hour, that amongst other truths He has constantly taught them this: that it is unseemly for the followers of so holy a Master to allow themselves more wives than one, a custom for which nothing but the gratification of appetite can be honestly and fairly pleaded. The question is not "Was polygamy lawful to a Jew?" which nobody will dispute; but "is it lawful to a Christian?" Till he can prove the affirmative, towards which he has yet done nothing, he had better be quiet. He only disturbs the peace of families, puts the most valuable part of the sex to the torture, and disgraces himself.

We are sorry for little William's illness. It is however the privilege of infancy to recover almost immediately what it has lost by sickness. We are sorry too for Mr. Thornton's dangerous condition. But he that is well prepared for the great journey cannot enter on it too soon for himself, though his friends will weep at his departure.

Your sister is well, and joins with me and your mother in affectionate remembrance of all at Stock.

We send you a cheese,
In hopes it will please:
If so, your mother
Will send you another.

Yours, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR SIR, Wednesday, June, 1782.

I AM glad you have read the plan three times with great pleasure; it is a sign that you have pretty well overcome your fears about the execution of it; for fear hath torment, and is therefore incompatible with pleasure.

I would willingly send you the lines that proceed from the lips of my snuff-box, were it possible, but alas! they are no longer in being. I am a severer critic upon myself than you would imagine, and have the singular knack of being out of humour with every thing, or almost every thing I write, when it is about nine days old; accordingly I have used them,—no matter how;—but Bentley himself could not have treated them with more indignity.

I thank you for your kind remembrance of me, and wish always to live in your esteem and affection. I shall do so, no doubt, till you discover, as you will, that I have no right to either.

I would send Mr. ———'s lines, but the letter is lost in a large bundle of others from the same hand, and I have not time to seek it. Whether it be what I approve myself or not, or whatever it be, I promise you a copy of what I write next; and am in the mean time, with Mrs. Unwin's and Mrs. Powley's best respects, Yours, WM. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

We took leave of your sister at the George at Northampton on Wednesday evening last, having accompanied her thither in a chaise, with which we meant to have treated her, but found on our return that, in spite of all our precaution, she had contrived to discharge it. The Leeds coach took her up the next morning,—I may properly say took her up, for it did not take her in;—being full, it afforded her no place but on the roof. There, however, she found a well behaved man, who promised to take care of her. This intelligence has been communicated to us in a note from our late servant, who lives at Northampton, and who slept with her at the inn. We hope that by this time she is safe and sound at Dewsbury, it being agreed by all who ever made the experiment, that the top of a coach is the safest situation about it, being farthest removed from the point of joltation, as a philosopher would say, and consequently the least affected by it.

I neither congratulate nor condole with you on account of your late acquisition of Mr. M——'s acquaintance. You have no great cause to be proud of it; his smiles are not so valuable now as they might have been thought before he commenced

an author. In that character he has lost the most desirable connexions he had, and would have reason to think himself too happy if he could prevail with you to fill one of the vacant niches. He did not always court you as he does now, not because you were not always worthy of his attention, but because he was not always equally sensible of your value. The advantage, could he win you, would be all on his side; for which reason, I esteem it, as I said, no proper subject for congratulation; but then again, in consideration of your security, and because, although he angles for you very skilfully, you will not bite, I do not account it an occasion of any anxiety or concern. You are chiefly to be pitied for the disagreeable sensations to which a conduct such as you will find it necessary to observe must unavoidably expose you. It is painful to a generous mind, when solicited and assailed with expressions of a warm affection, to be obliged to make an inadequate return, and to strain hard for a little show of civility, when cordiality seems to be called for. I can feel for you, because I know what I should feel in the same situation, and shall be glad to hear that you are handsomely rid of a business in which, though your prudence will guard you from being a loser, you have nothing to gain. I loved him once, but now I can only be sorry for him. Why will he kick against the thorns, and provoke a man so much his superior, (if I have any judgement in the subject,) both as a writer and a scholar, and especially as possessed of that ground of truth, virtue, good sense, and propriety, from which he cannot possibly be dislodged? Ignorance and impudence!—Oh fie! the man is indisputably learned, and writes like a gentleman.

I enclose a letter from Lady Austen, which I beg you to return to me in your next. Her sister was the bearer of it. We are reconciled. She seized the first opportunity to embrace your mother with tears of the tenderest affection, and I of course am satisfied. We were all a little awkward at first, but now are as easy as ever. She stays at Clifton till after Christmas. Having been obliged to communicate our disagreement, I give myself a release from that obligation of secrecy, under which I am engaged with respect to her other letters, accounting this, indeed, no part of our correspondence.

I ask pardon for neglecting a subject on which you consulted *me in* your last. It is too much my practice to reply to a

letter without [illegible] memory failed me. [illegible] Lily's Grammar, though I was indebted to him for my first introduction to the Latin language. The grammars used at Westminster, both for the Latin and the Greek, are those to which, if I had a young man to educate, I should give the preference. They have the merit of being compendious and perspicuous, in both which properties I judge Lily to be defective. If I am not mistaken, however, they are in use at the Charterhouse, so that I have no need to describe them to you. They are called Busby's Grammars, though Busby did not compose them. The compilation was a task imposed upon his uppermost boys, the plan only being drawn by the master, and the versification, which I have often admired for the ingenuity of it, being theirs. I never knew a boy of any abilities who had taken his notion of language from those grammars, that was not accurate to a degree that distinguished him from most others.

I am writing in the greenhouse for retirement sake, where I shiver with cold on this present third of July. Summer and winter therefore do not depend on the position of the sun with respect to the earth, but on His appointment who is sovereign in all things. Last Saturday night the cold was so severe, that it pinched off many of the young shoots of our peach-trees. The nurseryman we deal with informs me that the wall-trees are almost everywhere cut off, and that a friend of his near London has lost all the full-grown fruit-trees of an extensive garden. The very walnuts, which are now no bigger than small hazel-nuts, drop to the ground; and the flowers, though they blow, seem to have lost their odours. I walked with your mother yesterday in the garden, wrapped up in a winter surtout, and found myself not at all encumbered by it; not more, indeed, than I was in January. Cucumbers contract that spot which is seldom found upon them except late in the autumn, and melons hardly grow: it is a comfort, however, to reflect that if we cannot have these fruits in perfection, neither do we want them. Our crops of wheat are said to be very indifferent, the stalks of an unequal height, so that some of the ears are in danger of being smothered by the rest, and the ears in general lean and scanty. I never knew a summer in which we had not now and then a cold day to conflict with, but such

a wintry fortnight as the last, at this season of the year, I never remember. I fear you have made a discovery of the webs you mentioned a day too late. The vermin have probably by this time left them, and may laugh at all human attempts to destroy them; for every web they have hung upon the trees and bushes this year, you will probably next year find fifty, perhaps a hundred: their increase is almost infinite; so that if Providence does not interfere, and man sees fit to neglect them, the laughers you mention may live to be sensible of their mistake. Love to all.

Yours, WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 16, 1782.

THOUGH some people pretend to be clever in the way of prophetical forecast, and to have a peculiar talent of sagacity, by which they can divine the meaning of a providential dispensation while its consequences are yet in embryo, I do not. There is at this time to be found I suppose in the cabinet, and in both houses, a greater assemblage of able men, both as speakers and counsellors, than ever were contemporary in the same land. A man not accustomed to trace the workings of Providence, as recorded in Scripture, and that has given no attention to this particular subject, while employed in the study of profane history, would assert boldly that it is a token for good, that much may be expected from them, and that the country, though heavily afflicted, is not yet to be despaired of, distinguished as she is by so many characters of the highest class. Thus he would say; and I do not deny that the event might justify his skill in prognostics. God works by means, and in a case of great national perplexity and distress, wisdom and political ability seem to be the only natural means of deliverance. But a mind more religiously inclined, and perhaps a little tinctured with melancholy, might with equal probability of success, hazard a conjecture directly opposite. Alas! what is the wisdom of man, especially when he trusts in it as the only God of his confidence? When I consider the general contempt that is poured upon all things sacred, the profusion, the dissipation, the knavish cunning of some, the rapacity of others, and the

impenitence of all; I am rather inclined to fear that God, who honours himself by bringing human glory to shame, and by disappointing the expectations of those whose trust is in creatures, has signalized the present day as a day of much human sufficiency and strength, has brought together from all quarters of the land the most illustrious men to be found in it, only that he may prove the vanity of idols, and that when a great empire is falling, and he has pronounced a sentence of ruin against it, the inhabitants, be they weak or strong, wise or foolish, must fall with it. I am the rather confirmed in this persuasion, by observing that these luminaries of the state had no sooner fixed themselves in the political heaven, than the fall of the brightest of them shook all the rest. The arch of their power was no sooner struck than the key stone slipped out of its place; those that were closest in connexion with it followed, and the whole building, new as it is, seems to be already a ruin. If a man should hold this language, who could convict him of absurdity? The Marquis of Rockingham is minister; all the world rejoices, anticipating success in war, and a glorious peace. The Marquis of Rockingham is dead; all the world is afflicted, and relapses into its former despondence. What does this prove, but that the Marquis was their Almighty, and that now he is gone, they know no other? But let us wait a little, they will find another; perhaps the Duke of Portland, or perhaps the unpopular Shelburne, whom they now represent as a devil, may obtain that honour. Thus God is forgot; and when he is, his judgements are generally his remembrancers.

How shall I comfort you upon the subject of your present distress? Pardon me that I find myself obliged to smile at it, because who but yourself would be distressed upon such an occasion? You have behaved politely, and like a gentleman; you have hospitably offered your house to a stranger, who could not, in your neighbourhood at least, have been comfortably accommodated any where else. He by neither refusing nor accepting an offer that did him too much honour, has disgraced himself, but not you. I think for the future you must be more cautious of laying yourself open to a stranger, and never again expose yourself to incivilities from an archdeacon you are not acquainted with.

Though I did not mention it, I felt with you what you suf-

fered by the loss of Miss Ord. I was only silent because I could minister no consolation to you on such a subject, but what I knew your mind to be already stored with. Indeed, the application of comfort in such cases is a nice business, and perhaps when best managed might as well be let alone. I remember reading many years ago a long treatise on the subject of consolation, written in French; the author's name I forget, but I wrote these words in the margin:—"Special consolation! at least for a Frenchman, who is a creature the most easily comforted of any in the world!"

We are as happy in Lady Austen, and she in us, as ever;—having a lively imagination, and being passionately desirous of consolidating all into one family, (for she has taken her leave of London,) she has just sprung a project which serves at least to amuse us, and to make us laugh; it is, to hire Mr. Small's house, on the top of Clifton-hill, which is large, commodious, and handsome, will hold us conveniently, and any friends who may occasionally favour us with a visit. The house is furnished; but, if it can be hired without the furniture will let for a trifle. Your sentiments, if you please, upon this *demarche!*

The word *perhaps* in that passage of your letter, which relates to your correspondence with Mr. Madan, pleased me much. You say, *perhaps you may not write at all;* precisely the very conduct I would recommend to you. I have not seen his letters, but I have heard a character of them, and I dare say a just one. To disapprove them will be offensive, and not to mention them will be to disapprove them. How then can you avoid giving offence, unless you escape by *an archdeaconism,* and decline answering him at all. Indeed, indeed, in his present sentiments, however polite, entertaining, and sensible he may be, he is not a proper connexion for you. Your character is unblemished; permit me to say, keep it so,—and have nothing to do with Thelyphthora or its author.

I send you my last frank. Our best love attends you individually and all together. I give you joy of a happy change in the season, and myself also. I have filled four sides in less time than two would have cost me a week ago; such is the effect of sunshine upon such a butterfly as I am,

Yours, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, July 27, 1782.

I AM to thank you, though in great haste, for a very fine turbot and lobster its companion. Are you not going into the country? Shall I not hear from you when you are a little at leisure? I do not forget that you write innumerable letters upon business; but methinks a letter now and then not upon business should for that very reason be a refreshment to you. How fares the nation? You think I differ from you in politics. In truth I do not, I am ready at a moment's warning to adopt yours, and renounce my own. The nook I live in affords me no means of making up a set of opinions on any such subject so well founded as not to be departed from.—My respects attend Mrs. Hill. Your affectionate, WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Aug. 3, 1782.

ENTERTAINING some hope that Mr. Newton's next letter would furnish me with the means of satisfying your inquiry on the subject of Dr. Johnson's opinion, I have till now delayed my answer to your last; but the information is not yet come, Mr. Newton having intermitted a week more than usual since his last writing. When I receive it, favourable or not, it shall be communicated to you; but I am not very sanguine in my expectations from that quarter. Very learned and very critical heads are hard to please. He may perhaps treat me with lenity for the sake of my subject and design, but the composition I think will hardly escape his censure. Though all doctors may not be of the same mind, there is one doctor at least, whom I have lately discovered, my professed admirer. He too, like Johnson, was with difficulty persuaded to read, having an aversion to all poetry, except the Night Thoughts, which on a certain occasion, when being confined on board a ship he had no other employment, he got by heart. He was however prevailed upon, and read me several times over; so that if my volume had sailed with him, instead of Dr. Young's, I might perhaps have occupied that shelf in his memory which he then

allotted to the Doctor; his name is Renny, and he lives at Newport Pagnel.

It is a sort of paradox, but it is true: we are never more in danger than when we think ourselves most secure, nor in reality more secure than when we seem to be most in danger. Both sides of this apparent contradiction were lately verified in my experience.—Passing from the greenhouse to the barn, I saw three kittens (for we have so many in our retinue) looking with fixed attention at something, which lay on the threshold of a door, coiled up. I took but little notice of them at first; but a loud hiss engaged me to attend more closely, when behold —a viper! the largest I remember to have seen, rearing itself, darting its forked tongue, and ejaculating the aforementioned hiss at the nose of a kitten almost in contact with his lips. I ran into the hall for a hoe with a long handle, with which I intended to assail him, and returning in a few seconds missed him: he was gone, and I feared had escaped me. Still however the kitten sat watching immoveably upon the same spot. I concluded, therefore, that, sliding between the door and the threshold, he had found his way out of the garden into the yard. I went round immediately, and there found him in close conversation with the old cat, whose curiosity being excited by so novel an appearance, inclined her to pat his head repeatedly with her fore foot; with her claws however sheathed, and not in anger; but in the way of philosophical inquiry and examination. To prevent her falling a victim to so laudable an exercise of her talents, I interposed in a moment with the hoe, and performed upon him an act of decapitation, which though not immediately mortal proved so in the end. Had he slid into the passages, where it is dark, or had he, when in the yard, met with no interruption from the cat, and secreted himself in any of the out-houses, it is hardly possible but that some of the family must have been bitten; he might have been trodden upon without being perceived, and have slipped away before the sufferer could have well distinguished what foe had wounded him. Three years ago we discovered one in the same place, which the barber slew with a trowel.

Our proposed removal to Mr. Small's was, as you suppose, a jest, or rather a joco-serious matter. We never looked upon it as entirely feasible, yet we saw in it something so like practicability, that we did not esteem it altogether unworthy of our

attention. It was one of those projects which people of lively imaginations play with, and admire for a few days, and then break in pieces. Lady Austen returned on Thursday from London, where she spent the last fortnight, and whither she was called by an unexpected opportunity to dispose of the remainder of her lease. She has now therefore no longer any connexion with the great city, she has none on earth whom she calls friends but us, and no house but at Olney. Her abode is to be at the vicarage, where she has hired as much room as she wants, which she will embellish with her own furniture, and which she will occupy as soon as the minister's wife has produced another child, which is expected to make its entry in October.

Mr. Bull, a dissenting minister of Newport, a learned, ingenious, good-natured, pious friend of ours, who sometimes visits us, and whom we visited last week, has put into my hands three volumes of French poetry, composed by Madam Guyon;—a quietist say you, and a fanatic, I will have nothing to do with her.——It is very well, you are welcome to have nothing to do with her, but in the mean time her verse is the only French verse I ever read that I found agreeable; there is a neatness in it equal to that which we applaud with so much reason in the compositions of Prior. I have translated several of them, and shall proceed in my translations, till I have filled a Lilliputian paper-book I happen to have by me, which when filled I shall present to Mr. Bull. He is her passionate admirer, rode twenty miles to see her picture in the house of a stranger, which stranger politely insisted on his acceptance of it, and it now hangs over his parlour chimney. It is a striking portrait, too characteristic not to be a strong resemblance, and were it encompassed with a glory, instead of being dressed in a nun's hood, might pass for the face of an angel.

Our meadows are covered with a winter-flood in August; the rushes with which our bottomless chairs were to have been bottomed, and much hay which was not carried, are gone down the river on a voyage to Ely, and it is even uncertain whether they will ever return. *Sic transit gloria mundi?* I am glad you have found a curate; may he answer! Am happy in Mrs. Bouverie's continued approbation; it is worth while to write for such a reader. Yours, W. C.

TO LADY AUSTEN.

To watch the storms, and hear the sky
Give all our almanacks the lie;
To shake with cold, and see the plains
In autumn drown'd with wintry rains;
'Tis thus I spend my moments here,
And wish myself a Dutch Mynheer;
I then should have no need of wit,
For lumpish Hollander unfit.
Nor should I then repine at mud,
Or meadows deluged with a flood;
But in a bog live well content,
And find it just my element;
Should be a clod, and not a man,
Nor wish in vain for Sister Ann,
With charitable aid to drag
My mind out of its proper quag;
Should have the genius of a boor,
And no ambition to have more.

MY DEAR SISTER,

You see my beginning. I do not know but in time I may proceed even to the printing of halfpenny ballads.—Excuse the coarseness of my paper; I wasted such a quantity before I could accomplish any thing legible, that I could not afford finer. I intend to employ an ingenious mechanic of the town to make me a longer case; for you may observe that my lines turn up their tails like Dutch mastiffs, so difficult do I find it to make the two halves exactly coincide with each other. We wait with impatience for the departure of this unseasonable flood. We think of you, and talk of you, but we can do no more, till the waters shall subside. I do not think our correspondence should drop because we are within a mile of each other. It is but an imaginary approximation, the flood having in reality as effectually parted us as if the British Channel rolled between us.

Yours, my dear sister, with Mrs. Unwin's best love.

Aug. 12, 1782 W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The letter in which this to you was enclosed did not reach me till this afternoon, though dated the twenty-seventh of July, nor did it leave London till yesterday. Mr. Forster, who often

takes the charge of Mr. Newton's dispatches to me, no doubt forgot to put it into the post.

I thank you for Madame Guyon, I often spend a morning in translating some select pieces, such as I think may be successfully rendered in English. When time shall serve, you shall have the fruit of my labours.

Mrs. Unwin joins me in best respects to Mrs. Bull, not forgetting the young gentleman. We are as well as these turbulent elements will permit us to be, and in hopes of seeing you once more at Olney, I remain, your affectionate,

Aug. 14, 1782. WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

THE last four days have been days of adventure, teeming with incidents in which the opposite ingredients of pain and pleasure have been plentifully mingled, and of the most interesting kind. Lady Austen's behaviour to us ever since her return to Clifton has been such as to engage our affections to her more than ever. A flood, indeed, has sometimes parted us for many days; but though it has often been impossible for us who never ride to visit *her*, as soon as the water has become fordable by an ass, she has mounted one, and visited *us*. On Thursday last, in the evening, she came down with her sister to the evening lecture. She had not been long seated in her pew before she was attacked by the most excruciating pains of bilious colic: having much resolution, however, and being determined not to alarm her sister, the congregation, or the minister, she bore it without discovering much of what she felt even to Mrs. Jones till the service was over. It is a disorder to which she has lately been very subject. We were just sitting down to supper, when a hasty rap alarmed us. I ran to the hall window, for the hares being loose, it was impossible to open the door. The evening had been a dismal one, raining almost continually, but just at that time it held up. I entreated Mrs. Jones to go round to the gate, and, understanding by her tremulous voice that something distressful was at hand, made haste to meet her. I had no sooner reached the yard-door, and opened it, than Lady Austen appeared leaning upon

Mr. Scott. She could not speak, but thrusting her other arm under mine, with much difficulty made shift to attain the great chair by the fireside in the parlour: there she suffered unutterable anguish for a considerable time, till at length, by your mother's application and assistance, being a little relieved, she contrived to climb the staircase, and after about three hours agony was put to bed. At eleven at night we sent off a messenger to Northampton, who returned at seven the next morning, and brought a physician with him. He prescribed, and she was better. Friday night she slept tolerably, rose cheerful, and entertained us all Saturday with much agreeable conversation as usual; but her spirits being too great for her strength, the consequence was a frightful hysteric fit, which seized her just as she was going to bed. She was alone, for her sister had been obliged to go home; and thinking there was no need of such a precaution, she would have nobody else to sleep with her. The appointed signal was, that she should knock if she wanted any thing. She did so; your mother hastened to the chamber, and I after her to know if I could be of any use. She had not begun to undress, so I was admitted; and soon after her disorder became quite convulsive, accompanied with most of the symptoms of the most violent fits of that sort I have ever seen. In about an hour she grew better, rested tolerably, and was in good spirits on Sunday, and last night well enough to return to Clifton upon the ass. Today we dine there.

Are you curious to know her sentiments of *you?* The question has, no doubt, excited your curiosity if you had none before. Suppose, however, I postpone the gratification of it, and make it part of my next letter, finishing this with something more important? No; you must be satisfied this moment: no man that merits the good opinion of others can be indifferent to it. You shall then.

She would have known you for your mother's son the moment she saw you, had you not been announced by name. This is some praise, let me tell you, especially from her, who thinks that mother the best of women, and loves her at least as much as if she were her own. Your figure the most elegant she ever saw,—no longer complain of calfless legs, and a belly with nothing in it!—your countenance quite handsome—no

longer be ashamed of a nose you have sometimes thought too long!—every motion of your limbs, your action, your attitude, bespeak the gentleman;—added to all this, your vivacity and your good sense, together with an amiable disposition, which she is sure you possess, though she has but an hour's knowledge of you, have placed you so high in her esteem, that had you an opportunity to cultivate an interest there, you would soon be without a rival. Fourteen years ago I would not have made you this relation; such a stripling as you were at that time would have been spoiled by so much praise, and through the mere hunger after more would have lost what he had acquired already; but being the father of a family, and the minister of three parishes, I am not afraid to trust you with it. I beg Mrs. Unwin will add a short postscript to your next, just to inform me whether, when you perused this picture of yourself, you blushed, and how often. I had almost forgot what she desired me to insert, that she wishes as much for a Mr. Unwin here, as you can possibly for a Lady Austen at Stock.

Notwithstanding the uncommon rigour of the season, much of our wheat is carried, and in good condition. It does not appear that the murmurings of the farmers were with any reason: the corn has suffered much less by mildew than was reported; and if it is at all injured, (in this part of the world at least,) it must be ascribed to their foolish impatience, who *would* cut it down too soon. It is so cold this 27th of August that I shake in the greenhouse where I am writing.

Our united love attends you all. Your letter is gone to Dewsbury.

Yours, my dear William, WM. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

THE modest terms in which you express yourself on the subject of Lady Austen's commendation embolden me to add my suffrage to hers, and to confirm it by assuring you that I think her just and well founded in her opinion of you. The compliment indeed glances at myself; for were you less than she accounts you, I ought not to afford you that place in my

esteem which you have held so long. My own sagacity therefore and discernment are not a little concerned upon the occasion, for either you resemble the picture, or I have strangely mistaken my man, and formed an erroneous judgement of his character. With respect to your face and figure indeed, there I leave the ladies to determine, as being naturally best qualified to decide the point; but whether you are perfectly the man of sense, and the gentleman, is a question in which I am as much interested as they, and which, you being my friend, I am of course prepared to settle in your favour. The lady (whom, when you know her as well, you will love as much as we do) is, and has been during the last fortnight, a part of our family. Before she was perfectly restored to health, she returned to Clifton. Soon after she came back, Mr. Jones had occasion to go to London. No sooner was he gone, than the *Chateau*, being left without a garrison, was besieged as regularly as the night came on. Villains were both heard and seen in the garden, and at the doors and windows. The kitchen window in particular was attempted, from which they took a complete pane of glass, exactly opposite to the iron by which it was fastened; but providentially the window had been nailed to the wood-work, in order to keep it close, and that the air might be excluded; thus they were disappointed, and being discovered by the maid, withdrew. The ladies being worn out with continual watching, and repeated alarms, were at last prevailed upon to take refuge with us. Men furnished with firearms were put into the house, and the rascals, having intelligence of this circumstance, beat a retreat. Mr. Jones returned; Mrs. Jones and Miss Green, her daughter, left us, but Lady Austen's spirits having been too much disturbed, to be able to repose in a place where she had been so much terrified, she was left behind. She remains with us till her lodgings at the vicarage can be made ready for her reception. I have now sent you what has occurred of moment in our history since my last.

I say amen, with all my heart, to your observation on religious characters. Men who profess themselves adepts in mathematical knowledge, in astronomy, or jurisprudence, are generally as well qualified as they would appear. The reason may be, that they are always liable to detection, should they attempt to impose upon mankind, and therefore take care to be

what they pretend. In religion alone, a profession is often slightly taken up, and slovenly carried on, because forsooth candour and charity require us to hope the best, and to judge favourably of our neighbour, and because it is easy to deceive the ignorant, who are a great majority, upon this subject. Let a man attach himself to a particular party, contend furiously for what are properly called evangelical doctrines, and enlist himself under the banner of some popular preacher, and the business is done. Behold a Christian! a Saint! a Phœnix!—In the mean time perhaps his heart, and his temper, and even his conduct, are unsanctified; possibly less exemplary than those of some avowed infidels. No matter!—he can talk,—he has the Shibboleth of the true church,—the Bible in his pocket, and a head well stored with notions. But the quiet, humble, modest, and peaceable person, who is in his practice what the other is only in his profession, who hates a noise, and therefore makes none, who knowing the snares that are in the world, keeps himself as much out of it as he can, and never enters it, but when duty calls, and even then with fear and trembling, is the Christian that will always stand highest in the estimation of those, who bring all characters to the test of true wisdom, and judge of the tree by its fruit.

You are desirous of visiting the prisoners; you wish to administer to their necessities, and to give them instruction. This task you will undertake, though you expect to encounter many things in the performance of it that will give you pain. Now *this* I can understand;—you will not listen to the sensibilities that distress yourself, but to the distresses of others. Therefore, when I meet with one of the specious praters above-mentioned, I will send him to Stock, that by your diffidence he may be taught a lesson of modesty; by your generosity, a little feeling for others; and by your general conduct, in short, to chatter less, and to do more.

Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Sept. 6, 1782.

YESTERDAY, and not before, I received your letter, dated 11th of June, from the hands of Mr. Small. I should have been happy to have known him sooner; but whether being afraid of that horned monster, a Methodist, or whether from a principle of delicacy, or deterred by a flood, which has rolled for some weeks between Clifton and Olney, I know not,—he has favoured me only with a taste of his company, and will leave me on Saturday evening, to regret that our acquaintance, so lately begun, must be so soon suspended. He will dine with us that day, which I reckon a fortunate circumstance, as I shall have an opportunity to introduce him to the liveliest and most entertaining woman in the country. I have seen him but for half an hour, yet without boasting of much discernment, I see that he is polite, easy, cheerful, and sensible. An old man thus qualified, cannot fail to charm the lady in question. As to his religion, I leave it—I am neither his bishop nor his confessor. A man of his character, and recommended by you, would be welcome here, were he a Gentoo, or a Mahometan.

I learn from him that certain friends of mine, whom I have been afraid to enquire about by letter, are alive and well. The current of twenty years has swept away so many, whom I once knew, that I doubted whether it might be adviseable to send my love to your mother and your sisters. They may have thought my silence strange, but they have here the reason of it. Assure them of my affectionate remembrance, and that nothing would make me happier than to receive you all in my green-house, your own Mrs. Hill included. It is fronted with myrtles, and lined with mats, and would just hold us, for Mr. Small informs me *your* dimensions are much the same as usual.

Yours, my dear friend, W^M^. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

Mon aimable et tres cher Ami,

IT is not in the power of chaises or chariots to carry you where my affections will not follow you; if I heard that you were gone to finish your days in the Moon, I should not love you the less;

but should co [illegible]
appeared in the heavens. [illegible]
ever! Lost, but not forg [illegible] Live sup [illegible]
and smoke the remainder o [illegible]
of Earth, at least of all its [illegible]
thy removal; and as to t [illegible] to be found in
Moon, I am resolved to sup [illegible] than those b [illegible]
heavier they can hardly be.

I have never since I saw you failed to enquire of all the few that were likely to inform me, whether you were sick or abroad, for I have long wondered at your long silence and your long absence. I believe it was Mr. Jones who told me that you were gone from home. I suppose, therefore, that you have been at Ramsgate, and upon that condition I excuse you; but you should have remembered, my friend, that people do not go to the seaside to bring back with them pains in the bowels and such weakness and lassitude as you complain of. You ought to have returned ten years younger, with your nerves well braced and your spirits at the top of the weather glass. Come to us, however, and Mrs. Unwin shall add her attentions and her skill to those of Mrs. Bull; and we will give you broth to heal your bowels, and toasted rhubarb to strengthen them, and send you back as brisk and as cheerful as we wish you to be always.

Both your advice and your manner of giving it are gentle and friendly, and like yourself. I thank you for them, and do not refuse your counsel because it is not good, or because I dislike it, but because it is not for me; there is not a man upon earth that might not be the better for it, myself only excepted. Prove to me that I have a right to pray, and I will pray without ceasing; yes, and praise too, even in the belly of this hell, compared with which Jonah's was a palace, a temple of the living God. But let me add, there is no encouragement in the Scripture so comprehensive as to include my case, nor any consolation so effectual as to reach it. I do not relate it to you, because you could not believe it; you would agree with me if you could. And yet the sin by which I am excluded from the privileges I once enjoyed, you would account no sin, you would even tell me that it was a duty. This is strange;—you will think me mad,—but I am not mad, most noble Festus, I am

only in despair, and those powers of mind which I possess are only permitted to me for my amusement at some times, and to acuminate and enhance my misery at others. I have not even asked a blessing upon my food these ten years, nor do I expect that I shall ever ask it again. Yet I love you, and such as you, and determine to enjoy your friendship while I can:—it will not be long, we must soon part for ever.

Madame Guyon is finished, but not quite transcribed. Mrs. Unwin, who has lately been much indisposed, unites her love to you with mine, and we both wish to be affectionately remembered to Mrs. Bull and the young gentleman.

Yours, my friend,

Oct, 27, 1782. WM. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 4, 1782.

You are too modest; though your last consisted of three sides only, I am certainly a letter in your debt. It is possible that this present writing may prove as short. Yet, short as it may be, it will be a letter, and make me a creditor, and you my debtor. A letter indeed ought not to be estimated by the length of it but by the contents, and how can the contents of any letter be more agreeable than your last?

You tell me that John Gilpin made you laugh tears, and that the ladies at court are delighted with my Poems. Much good may they do them! May they become as wise as the writer wishes them, and then they will be much happier than he! I know there is in the book that wisdom which cometh from above, because it was from above that I received it. May they receive it too! For whether they drink it out of the cistern, or whether it falls upon them immediately from the clouds, as it did on me, it is all one. It is the water of life, which whosoever drinketh shall thirst no more. As to the famous horseman abovementioned, he and his feats are an inexhaustible source of merriment. At least we find him so, and seldom meet without refreshing ourselves with the recollection of them. You are perfectly at liberty to deal with them as you please. *Auctore tantùm anonymo imprimantur;* and when printed, send me a copy.

I congratulate you on the discharge of your duty and your conscience, by the pains you have taken for the relief of the prisoners. You proceeded wisely, yet courageously, and deserved better success. Your labours however will be remembered elsewhere, when you shall be forgotten here; and if the poor folks at Chelmsford should never receive the benefit of them, you will yourself receive it in heaven. It is pity that men of fortune should be determined to acts of beneficence sometimes by popular whim, or prejudice, and sometimes by motives still more unworthy. The liberal subscription raised in behalf of the widows of the seamen lost in the Royal George was an instance of the former. At least a plain, short, and sensible letter in the newspaper convinced me at the time, that it was an unnecessary and injudicious collection: and the difficulty you found in effectuating your benevolent intentions on this occasion, constrains me to think that had it been an affair of more notoriety than merely to furnish a few poor fellows with a little fuel to preserve their extremities from the frost, you would have succeeded better. Men really pious delight in doing good by stealth: but nothing less than an ostentatious display of bounty will satisfy mankind in general. I feel myself disposed to furnish you with an opportunity to shine in secret. We do what we can. But that *can* is little. You have rich friends, are eloquent on all occasions, and know how to be pathetic on a proper one. The winter will be severely felt at Olney by many, whose sobriety, industry, and honesty, recommend them to charitable notice: and we think we could tell such persons as Mrs. Bouverie, or Mr. Smith, half a dozen tales of distress, that would find their way into hearts as feeling as theirs. You will do as you see good; and we in the mean time shall remain convinced, that you will do your best. Lady Austen will no doubt do something; for she has great sensibility and compassion.

Your mother wishes you to buy her twelve yards of silk for a gown, from five to seven shillings a yard, and half ell wide. The colour, either ruby, garnet, or *boüe de Paris*.

Yours, my dear Unwin, W. C.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM BULL.

Nov. 5, 1782.

Charissme Taurorum——
Quot sunt, vel fuerunt, vel posthac aliis erunt in annis.

WE shall rejoice to see you, and I just write to tell you so. Whatever else I want, I have, at least, this quality in common with publicans and sinners, that I love those that love me, and, for that reason, you in particular. Your warm and affectionate manner demands it of me. And though I consider your love as growing out of a mistaken expectation that you shall see me a spiritual man hereafter, I do not love you much the less for it. I only regret that I did not know you intimately in those happier days, when the frame of my heart and mind was such as might have made a connexion with me not altogether unworthy of you.

I add only Mrs. Unwin's remembrances, and that I am glad you believe me to be, what I truly am,

Your faithful and affectionate, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 11, 1782.

YOUR shocking scrawl, as you term it, was, however, a very welcome one. The character, indeed, has not quite the neatness and beauty of an engraving; but, if it cost me some pains to decypher it, they were well rewarded by the minute information it conveyed. I am glad your health is such, that you have nothing more to complain of than may be expected on the down-hill side of life. If mine is better than yours, it is to be attributed, I suppose, principally, to the constant enjoyment of country air and retirement; the most perfect regularity in matters of eating, drinking, and sleeping; and a happy emancipation from every thing that wears the face of business. I lead the life I always wished for, and the single circumstance of dependence excepted, (which, between ourselves, is very contrary to my predominant humour and disposition,) have no want left broad enough for another wish to stand upon.

You may not, perhaps, live to see your trees attain to the

dignity of timber;—I, nevertheless, approve of your planting, and the disinterested spirit that prompts you to it. Few people plant, when they are young; a thousand other less profitable amusements divert their attention; and most people, when the date of youth is once expired, think it too late to begin. I can tell you, however, for your comfort and encouragement, that when a grove, which Major Cowper had planted, was of eighteen years growth, it was no small ornament to his grounds, and afforded as complete a shade as could be desired. Were I as old as your mother, in whose longevity I rejoice, and the more, because I consider it as, in some sort, a pledge and assurance of yours, and should come to the possession of land worth planting, I would begin to-morrow, and even without previously insisting upon a bond from Providence that I should live five years longer.

I saw last week a gentleman who was lately at Hastings. I asked him where he lodged. He replied at P——'s. I next enquired after the poor man's wife, whether alive or dead. He answered, dead. So then, said I, she has scolded her last; and a sensible old man will go down to his grave in peace. Mr. P——, to be sure, is of no great consequence, either to you or to me; but having so fair an opportunity to inform myself about him, I could not neglect it. It gives me pleasure to learn somewhat of a man I knew a little of so many years since, and for that reason merely I mention the circumstance to you.

I find a single expression in your letter which needs correction. You say I carefully avoid paying you a visit at Wargrave. Not so;—but connected as I happily am, and rooted where I am, and not having travelled these twenty years,—being, besides, of an indolent temper, and having spirits that cannot bear a bustle—all these are so many insuperables in the way. They are not, however, in yours; and if you and Mrs. Hill will make the experiment, you shall find yourselves as welcome here both to me and to Mrs. Unwin, as it is possible you can be any where. Yours affectionately, W^M^. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, Nov. 18, 1782.

On the part of the poor, and on our part, be pleased to make acknowledgments, such as the occasion calls for, to our bene-

ficent friend Mr. Smith. I call him ours, because having experienced his kindness to myself in a former instance, and in the present his disinterested readiness to succour the distressed, my ambition will be satisfied with nothing less. He may depend upon the strictest secrecy; no creature shall hear him mentioned, either now or hereafter, as the person from whom we have received this bounty. But when I speak of him, or hear him spoken of by others, which sometimes happens, I shall not forget what is due to so rare a character. I wish, and your mother wishes it too, that he could sometimes take us in his way to Nottingham; he will find us happy to receive a person whom we must needs account it an honour to know. We shall exercise our best discretion in the disposal of the money; but in this town, where the Gospel has been preached so many years, where the people have been favoured so long with laborious and conscientious ministers, it is not an easy thing to find those who make no profession of religion at all, and are yet proper objects of charity. The profane are so profane, so drunken, dissolute, and in every respect worthless, that to make them partakers of his bounty would be to abuse it. We promise, however, that none shall touch it but such as are miserably poor, yet at the same time industrious and honest, two characters frequently united here, where the most watchful and unremitting labour will hardly procure them bread. We make none but the cheapest laces, and the price of them is fallen almost to nothing. Thanks are due to yourself likewise, and are hereby accordingly rendered, for waving your claim in behalf of your own parishioners. You are always with them, and they are always, at least some of them, the better for your residence among them. Olney is a populous place, inhabited chiefly by the half-starved and the ragged of the earth, and it is not possible for our small party and small ability to extend their operations so far as to be much felt among such numbers. Accept therefore your share of their gratitude, and be convinced that when they pray for a blessing upon those who have relieved their wants, He that answers that prayer, and when he answers it, will remember his servant at Stock.

I little thought when I was writing the history of John Gilpin, that he would appear in print—I intended to laugh, and to make two or three others laugh, of whom you were one. But now all the world laughs, at least if they have the

same relish for a tale ridiculous in itself, and quaintly told, as we have.—Well—they do not always laugh so innocently, or at so small an expense—for in a world like this, abounding with subjects for satire, and with satirical wits to mark them, a laugh that hurts nobody has at least the grace of novelty to recommend it. Swift's darling motto was, *Vive la bagatelle*—a good wish for a philosopher of his complexion, the greater part of whose wisdom, whencesoever it came, most certainly came not from above. *La bagatelle* has no enemy in me, though it has neither so warm a friend, nor so able a one, as it had in him. If I trifle, and merely trifle, it is because I am reduced to it by necessity—a melancholy, that nothing else so effectually disperses, engages me sometimes in the arduous task of being merry by force. And, strange as it may seem, the most ludicrous lines I ever wrote have been written in the saddest mood, and, but for that saddest mood, perhaps had never been written at all. To say truth, it would be but a shocking vagary, should the mariners on board a ship buffeted by a terrible storm, employ themselves in fiddling and dancing; yet sometimes much such a part act I.

I hear from Mrs. Newton, that some great persons have spoken with great approbation of a certain book.—Who they are, and what they have said, I am to be told in a future letter. The Monthly Reviewers in the mean time have satisfied me well enough. Yours, my dear William, W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nov. 1782.

I AM to thank you for a fine cod, which came most opportunely to make a figure on our table, on an occasion that made him singularly welcome. I write, and you send me a fish. This is very well, but not altogether what I want. I wish to hear from you, because the fish, though he serves to convince me that you have me still in remembrance, says not a word of those that sent him, and with respect to your and Mrs. Hill's health, prosperity, and happiness, leaves me as much in the dark as before. You are aware, likewise, that where there is an exchange of letters, it is much easier to write. But I know the multiplicity of your affairs, and therefore perform my part of the correspondence as well as I can, convinced that you would not omit yours, if you could help it.

Three days since I received a note from old Mr. Small, which was more than civil—it was warm and friendly. The good veteran excuses himself for not calling upon me, on account of the feeble state in which a fit of the gout had left him. He tells me, however, that he has seen Mrs. Hill, and your improvements at Wargrave, which will soon become an ornament to the place. May they! and may you both live long to enjoy them! I shall be sensibly mortified if the season and his gout together should deprive me of the pleasure of receiving him here; for he is a man much to my taste, and quite an unique in this country.

When it suits you to send me some more of Elliott's medicines, I shall be obliged to you. My eyes are, in general, better than I remember them to have been, since I first opened them upon this sublunary stage, which is now a little more than half a century ago; yet I do not think myself safe, either without those remedies, or when, through long keeping, they have, in part, lost their virtue. I seldom use them without thinking of our trip to Maidenhead, where I first experienced their efficacy. We are growing old; but this is between ourselves: the world knows nothing of the matter. Mr. Small tells me you look much as you did: and as for me, being grown rather plump, the ladies tell me I am as young as ever.

Yours ever, W^M^. COWPER.

TO MRS. NEWTON.

MY DEAR MADAM, Nov. 23, 1782.

THE soles with which you favoured us were remarkably fine. Accept our thanks for them; thanks likewise for the trouble you take in vending my poems, and still more for the interest you take in their success. My authorship is undoubtedly pleased when I hear that they are approved either by the great or the small; but to be approved by the great, as Horace observed many years ago, is fame indeed. Having met with encouragement, I consequently wish to write again; but wishes are a very small part of the qualifications necessary for such a purpose. Many a man who has succeeded tolerably well in his first attempt, has spoiled all by the second. But it just occurs to me that I told you so once before, and if my memory had served me with the intelligence a minute sooner, I would not have repeated the observation now.

The winter sets in with great severity. The rigour of the season, and the advanced price of grain, are very threatening to the poor. It is well with those that can feed upon a promise, and wrap themselves up warm in the robe of salvation. A good fire-side and a well-spread table are but very indifferent substitutes for these better accommodations; so very indifferent, that I would gladly exchange them both, for the rags and the unsatisfied hunger of the poorest creature that looks forward with hope to a better world, and weeps tears of joy in the midst of penury and distress. What a world is this! How mysteriously governed and, in appearance left to itself. One man, having squandered thousands at a gaming-table, finds it convenient to travel; gives his estate to somebody to manage for him; amuses himself a few years in France and Italy; returns, perhaps, wiser than he went, having acquired knowledge which, but for his follies, he would never have acquired; again makes a splendid figure at home, shines in the senate, governs his country as its minister, is admired for his abilities, and, if successful, adored, at least by a party. When he dies he is praised as a demi-god, and his monument records every thing but his vices. The exact contrast of such a picture is to be found in many cottages at Olney. I have no need to describe them; you know the characters I mean. They love God, they trust him, they pray to him in secret, and though he means to reward them openly, the day of recompense is delayed. In the mean time they suffer every thing that infirmity and poverty can inflict upon them. Who would suspect, that has not a spiritual eye to discern it, that the fine gentleman was one whom his Maker had in abhorrence, and the wretch last-mentioned, dear to him as the apple of his eye? It is no wonder that the world, who are not in the secret, find themselves obliged, some of them, to doubt a Providence, and others absolutely to deny it, when almost all the real virtue there is in it, is to be found living and dying in a state of neglected obscurity, and all the vices of others cannot exclude them from the privilege of worship and honour! But behind the curtain the matter is explained; very little, however, to the satisfaction of the great.

If you ask me why I have written thus, and to you especially, to whom there was no need to write thus, I can only reply, that having a letter to write, and no news to communicate, I

picked up the first subject I found, and pursued it as far as was convenient for my purpose.

Mr. Newton and I are of one mind on the subject of patriotism. Our dispute was no sooner begun than it ended. It would be well, perhaps, if, when two disputants begin to engage, their friends would hurry each into a separate chaise, and order them to opposite points of the compass. Let one travel twenty miles east; the other as many west; then let them write their opinions by the post. Much altercation and chafing of the spirit would be prevented; they would sooner come to a right understanding, and running away from each other, would carry on the combat more judiciously, in exact proportion to the distance.

My love to that gentleman, if you please; and tell him, that, like him, though I love my country, I hate its follies and its sins, and had rather see it scourged in mercy, than judicially hardened by prosperity.

Mrs. Unwin is not very well, but better than she has been. She adds her love to both. Yours, my dear Madam, as ever,

W^M^. COWPER.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM, Nov. 30, 1782.

SINCE such is Mr. Smith's desire, we will dispose of the money before the expiration of the year. It is, indeed, already disposed of, except a very small part, which it was our intention to reserve till the increasing severity of the season should call for the application of it. A man and his wife have been made so happy, that they could neither of them sleep for joy. They are perfectly honest, sober, and industrious, but with all their industry were unable to maintain themselves and five children, without running deeply in debt to the baker. The discharge of this debt, and the additional comfort of some necessary clothing, were blessings so unexpected, that the transports they felt on receiving them are not often equalled.

Your friend, Mr. Teedon, who with all his foibles is a deserving man, so far at least as the strictest honesty and the most laborious attention to his little school, can entitle him to that character, has been very seasonably and substantially relieved. The poor man's writing paper was almost all expended, and not having wherewithal to purchase more, or to pay his small arrears to the stationer, he had fretted himself into a

slow fever, which Mr. Smith, however has effectually cured, and he stands restored to his former health, and sprightliness of conversation. Rem May was likewise near at hand, a formidable era, which I believe his indigence always obliges him to anticipate with horror but the terrors of it are removed, and the sum of three guineas has performed all these wonders. Our judgement in these matters is, that it is better to give effectual relief to a few than to spin a sum into diminutive items, the operation of which is scarcely perceptible among many. We have, however, delivered others from the entanglement of debts which, though small were to them as insupportable burthen; and by putting a few shillings in their pockets, have encouraged them to undergo the drudgery of their miserable occupations with alacrity and delight. I have been rather circumstantial in my detail because, though it is certain Mr. Smith would not have entrusted his bounty to our disposal, had he not had something like an implicit confidence in our discretion, it will perhaps afford him satisfaction to know, with some degree of particularity, in what manner that discretion has been exercised. We have given to none but the honest, the worthy, and consequently, I may add, to none but the truly grateful.

To-morrow I shall expect a letter from Mr. Newton, it is not therefore in my power to give you any information by this post on the subject, which Mrs. Newton touched so lightly. Whether he himself will enlarge upon it is doubtful, being fearful, for wise reasons, of receiving praise, and for the same reasons fearful of communicating it. But as for me, my modesty is in no danger; I have that within which sufficiently guards me against the workings of vanity; no man would think highly of himself, if he believed that his Maker thought meanly of him.

I have a poem upon Friendship, which, for the life of me, I cannot now transcribe; it is at least thirty stanzas in length, each consisting of six lines. On some future occasion, perhaps, I may have more time, and find myself less indolent. At present I can write nothing but a letter, and, to say the truth, am not sorry when I have reached the end of it.

I beg you will mention us handsomely to Mr. Smith and to Mr. and Mrs. Creuzé. Your mother is pretty well; her love attends you. Yours, my dear friend,

WM. COWPER.

I have written this a week sooner than I need have done, a discovery I have made this moment; it is possible, therefore, that I may find an opportunity to send you Friendship.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM UNWIN.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

DOCTOR BEATTIE is a respectable character. I account him a man of sense, a philosopher, a scholar, a person of distinguished genius, and a good writer. I believe him too a Christian; with a profound reverence for the Scripture, with great zeal and ability to enforce the belief of it (both which he exerts with the candour and good manners of a gentleman), he seems well entitled to that allowance; and to deny it him, would impeach one's own right to the appellation. With all these good things to recommend him, there can be no dearth of sufficient reasons to read his writings. You favoured me some years since with one of his volumes, by which I was both pleased and instructed: and I beg that you will send me the new one, when you can conveniently spare it, or rather bring it yourself, while the swallows are yet upon the wing; for the summer is going down apace.

You tell me you have been asked, if I am intent upon another volume? I reply,—not at present, not being convinced that I have met with sufficient encouragement. I account myself happy in having pleased a few, but am not rich enough to despise the many. I do not know what sort of market my commodity has found, but if a slack one, I must beware how I make a second attempt. My bookseller will not be willing to incur a certain loss; and I can as little afford it. Notwithstanding what I have said, I write, and am even now writing for the press. I told you that I had translated several of the poems of Madame Guyon. I told you too, or I am mistaken, that Mr. Bull designed to print them. That gentleman is gone to the seaside with Mrs. Wilberforce, and will be absent six weeks. My intention is to surprise him at his return with the addition of as much more translation as I have already given him. This however is still less likely to be a popular work than my former. Men that have no religion would despise it; and men that have no religious experience would not understand it. But the strain of simple and unaffected piety in the original is sweet beyond expression. She sings like an angel, and for that very reason has found but few

admirers. Other things I write too, as you will see on the other side, but these merely for my amusement[1]. W. C.

TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Dec. 7, 1782.

At seven o'clock this evening, being the seventh of December, I imagine I see you in your box at the coffee-house. No doubt the waiter, as ingenious and adroit as his predecessors were before him, raises the teapot to the ceiling with his right hand, while in his left the teacup descending almost to the floor, receives a limpid stream; limpid in its descent, but no sooner has it reached its destination, than frothing and foaming to the view, it becomes a roaring syllabub. This is the nineteenth winter since I saw you in this situation; and if nineteen more pass over me before I die, I shall still remember a circumstance we have often laughed at.

How different is the complexion of your evenings and mine! —yours, spent amid the ceaseless hum that proceeds from the inside of fifty noisy and busy periwigs; mine, by a domestic fireside, in a retreat as silent as retirement can make it; where no noise is made but what we make for our own amusement. For instance here are two rustics, and your humble servant in company. One of the ladies has been playing on the harpsichord, while I, with the other, have been playing at battledore and shuttlecock. A little dog, in the mean time, howling under the chair of the former, performed, in the vocal way, to admiration. This entertainment over, I began my letter, and having nothing more important to communicate, have given you an account of it. I know you love dearly to be idle, when you can find an opportunity to be so; but as such opportunities are rare with you, I thought it possible that a short description of the idleness I enjoy might give you pleasure. The happiness we cannot call our own, we yet seem to possess, while we sympathise with our friends who can.

The papers tell me that peace is at hand, and that it is at a great distance; that the siege of Gibraltar is abandoned, and that it is to be still continued. It is happy for me, that though I love my country, I have but little curiosity. There was a time when these contradictions would have distressed me, but I have learnt by experience that it is best for little people like

[1] This letter closed with the English and Latin Verses on the loss of the *Royal George*.

myself to be patient, and to wait till time affords the intelligence which no speculations of theirs can ever furnish.

I thank you for a fine cod with oysters, and hope that ere long, I shall have to thank you for procuring me Elliott's medicines. Every time I feel the least uneasiness in either eye, I tremble lest, my Æsculapius being departed, my infallible remedy should be lost for ever. Adieu. My respects to Mrs. Hill. Yours, faithfully,

W^M^. COWPER.

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

The river Ouse is the most agreeable circumstance in this part of the world, p. 161.—"Ouse's *silent* tide," and the windings of the stream, not without charms to the muse of Cowper, and noticed by him in his tale of the Dog and Water Lily, are among the thousand instances of his minutely faithful allusions. The Ouse flows with a lazy and consequently *silent* progress, its whole descent to the sea being very trifling. It is remarkable for the wildest sinuosities, and a singularly tortuous course, from its very source at Ouse Well, near the manor house of Steane in Northamptonshire. The following Leonine verses of a monk in the twelfth century (Bodleian MS. 535) describe the character of the Ouse, (and of its tributary stream the Ivel,) with topical accuracy, though not with poetical elegance:—

Est quidam Fluvius, *vario sinuamine* tensus,
Tractibus obliquus, quosdam relegens comitatus . . . .
Ast, alio de fonte satus *dat abunde meatus ;*
Heblus et Ousa sui prisci dixêre coloni.

Drayton (Polyolbion, song xxii.) describes its serpentine course with the same fidelity.—G. C. G.

Drayton's lines will be found in the text (vol. i. p. 140). The Leonine verses are from an ancient Life of St. Neots, probably by a monk of St. Neots. Both extracts form a good commentary on these lines in the Task, book i.

Here Ouse, slow winding through a level plain,
Conducts the eye along her sinuous course.—G. C. G.

—— o'er plains we ride,
Where Ouse conducts his silver tide;
So slow his winding waters stray,
He seems to linger on his way,
As loth to leave the pleasing scene
Of woods, corn-fields, and pastures green.
Thus man, low-grovelling, like the river,
Would loiter in this life for ever;
So beautiful these scenes appear,
He thinks it better to be here
Than try that country, from whose bourn
No pale-eyed travellers return.

Journal of a Five Days' Journey to Doncaster, wrote with a pencil, in a chaise.—*Poetical Calendar*, vol. ix. p. 107.

Another acquaintance I have lately made is with a Mr. Nicholson, a

north country divine, very poor, but very good and very happy. He reads prayers here twice a day all the year round, and travels on foot to serve two churches every Sunday through the year, his journey out and home again being sixteen miles. 1765. P. 261. The Rev. Isaac Nicholson was born in 1730, near Wigton, in Cumberland. The curacies to which he walked every Sunday from Huntingdon were Papworth St. Agnes, in Cambridgeshire, and Yelling, in Huntingdonshire; the latter curacy he held during the first year of Mr. Venn's incumbency, 1770-1. Mr. Venn writes thus, (June 3, 1775,) "Mrs. Nicholson (in whose death-bed testimony I have lately had a delightful cordial,)was the wife of the assistant I had for the first year I was at Yelling; and as soon as she heard she obeyed. She became a most earnest, though a trembling seeker of her Lord, and last Thursday I preached her funeral sermon. She left a husband and four young children; and her last words were sweet indeed; 'Trust, O trust,' said she, 'in Jesus, all of you! for he has proved faithful to his promises, and fulfilled all my desires.'"

Mr. Nicholson died in , vicar of Leighton Bromswold, in Huntingdonshire, the parish of the poet Herbert, who built the neat little village church, of which there is an engraving in Zouch's edition of Walton's Lives, and in Major's. He held also at his death the curacy of Alconbury, where he resided, died, and was buried.—G. C. G.

As to the affair of the fortune teller, he never mentioned it to me, nor was there any such paper found as you mention. I looked over all his papers before I left the place, and had there been such a one, must have discovered it. I have heard the report from other quarters, but no other particulars than that the woman foretold him when he should die, P. 216.—Upon the affair thus mentioned by Cowper, I have been favoured with full particulars in the following letter from a gentleman whose name would authenticate it to the public, if he had not thought proper to withhold it at this time. It is a singularly curious story.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR, March 24, 1836.

I AM tempted to write to you from reading a passage which a friend pointed out to me, in the volume (edited by you) of Cowper's Works, relating to his brother John Cowper, and to the story of a *fortune-teller's prediction*, which Cowper himself disbelieved, because his brother never mentioned it to him. It is curious enough that I should, at this distant period, be alone perhaps able to give you the particulars of a story so mysterious at the time, and I think you will like to have them, though of no consequence to your undertaking. It happened, however, that John Cowper, the hero of this marvellous tale, was in his boyhood the school-fellow and early companion of my own father, and continued to be his most intimate and valued friend till his early career was terminated by the death recorded in his brother's letters. My father had the strongest affection for John Cowper's memory, and seldom talked of him without such sorrow for his loss as made him willing to avoid the subject: but I well remember that, when at the age of fourteen or fifteen, I once was running with a

shilling to the door at ———, to have my fortune told by some travelling gipsies then begging at it, my father stopped me, and, with more seriousness than I expected, besought me to give him my solemn promise that, as long as I lived, I never would indulge that idle curiosity. Of course I did so, and enquired the reason, as he might be sure I was not superstitious enough to believe, and must know it was at most but an idle and innocent piece of nonsense. He told me the reason was the effect such predictions had in after life, and in hours of weakness, after some casual circumstance, perhaps, had proved true. He then told me the following story of John Cowper, under circumstances that made at the time so deep an impression on my mind, that I can trust my memory in spite of the intervening period of nearly fifty years; but in truth it has never been out of my thoughts. John Cowper and my father were both, when children, at a preparatory school, then much frequented, at Felstead, in (I think) Essex. They both together enquired their future fortunes from a travelling gipsy tinker, or pedler, who came to beg at the school, and in an old soldier's red coat. (He was a man, and *not an "old woman,"* as it seems the poet Cowper had been told.) My father said that his own share of the prophecy was commonplace nonsense, which he forgot; but that it was predicted to Cowper that he would only remain a very short time at Felstead, and would, after leaving it, be sent to *a larger school:* that he would go to the university, and, before he left it, would form an attachment strong enough to give him much disappointment, as it would not be mutual: that he would not marry *before* he was thirty, but that *after* that age his fate became obscure, and the lines of his hand showed no more prognostics of futurity. Such was the prediction on which, I suppose, all the other rumours had been founded. It actually happened that, within a very short time, from some family accident, which I have forgot, but I believe the illness or death of a near relation, John Cowper was summoned to go home, by a servant, who came express. There was nothing very marvellous in this coincidence, even supposing it accidental, or in the itinerant prophet having heard of some such illness. Cowper, too, did not return to Felstead, but was sent, I think, to Eton. My father, who was not an Etonian, I believe continued to hear from him; but at all events they again met at the university, where their intimacy was not only renewed, but cemented by the most cordial friendship. It continued after my father left Cambridge, where, if I did not misunderstand him, Cowper continued (at least *occasionally*) to reside. (Was he a fellow of any college?) They saw each other continually, corresponded with each other, and belonged to a set of young friends who, after leaving college, met by agreement annually, for three weeks or a month, at Grantham, and some of them hunted. My father married in a few years, and John Cowper more than once accompanied him and my mother into ———. In these visits he contrived to accomplish another part of the prediction, by becoming much attached to a younger sister of my father's, who assuredly did not return his affection. All these coineidences made an impression on John Cowper's imagination, and he often reminded my father of their interview with the pedler at Felstead. When Cowper approached the age of

thirty, I think, or at least that which the gipsy fixed as the term of his prediction, my father saw him again at Cambridge, I believe in his way to town. Cowper was walking with him in one of the college gardens, in one of the avenues where the gate was open in front of them, and suddenly interrupted the conversation by exclaiming, "Did you see that man pass?" My father, who had observed nothing, asked him what man he meant? John Cowper replied, "The very man you and I met at Felstead, and in a soldier's jacket—I saw him pass the gate!" They both ran to it, but in the public road saw no such person. Cowper said, "It is a warning—you know he could predict nothing of me after my thirtieth year." He mentioned this more than once while my father remained in Cambridge, though not apparently dejected, and I believe in tolerable health. The real circumstances, thus detailed, were probably known only to themselves; and John Cowper does not seem to have made mention of them, except in such allusions as gave rise to the vague reports which his brother disbelieved. It was, however, the last time that my father saw his friend. He sickened, whether from the prediction, or some natural cause, and surrounded by zealous religionists, eager for what is called a conversion, his own old and tried friends were never apprised of his danger, or their letters replied to, till they were shocked by the news of his death. The conversion boasted of was, probably, from one set of religious opinions to another, whether better or worse; but, from all I could learn, certainly not from *profligacy* to *penitence*, because John Cowper does not appear to have been a dissolute man. I infer this from the kind and respectful manner in which my mother, as well as my father, always spoke of their early friend, and of his habits, which had certainly endeared his memory to both of them. My father never, I think, heartily forgave his brother and the Methodists, for the cruel scruples which prevented him from being told of his friend's danger, and denied him the consolation of a last interview,—of which, even when he told me this, being nearly twenty years after it happened, he spoke with tears. You will probably infer from this story, that the dejection of John Cowper's spirits in illness, and the fancied apparition of the gipsy pedler, were but too surely indications of the same constitutional malady, which so often embittered the existence of his surviving brother.

"I cannot doubt that this singular story will be interesting to you, and you are most welcome to it, as I can assure you it is authentic in all the facts; but I should be sorry to have my name and my father's attached to it, at least in print, because I am neither prepared for a paper-war, or ready, at the distance of fifty years, to vouch for the exact *minutiæ* of the places and dates which my memory seems to recall. Some critic might triumph in proving that John Cowper was thirty-one, or two, when he died, or that he was somewhere else and not at Cambridge the year before. You know enough of this kind of cavil, not to wonder at my wish to avoid it. The story of John Cowper's conversion has also been long since bandied about in religious and literary gossip, and belief in his former sinfulness, and that of all his early companions, was, and perhaps still is, an article of party faith with the professors, which it would be hazardous to controvert, especially as it happened before I was born."

Care vale! sed non æternum, care, valeto!
Namque iterum tecum, sim modo dignus ero,—p. 262.

Cowper must certainly (though perhaps unconsciously) have had Lowth's epitaph in his mind.

Cara, vale, ingenio præstans, pietate, pudore,
Et plusquam natæ nomine cara, vale!
Cara Maria, vale! At veniet felicius ævum,
Quando iterum tecum, sim modo dignus, ero.
Cara, redi, lætâ tum dicam voce, paternos
Ejà age in amplexus, cara Maria, redi!"

Dearer than daughter, parallel'd by few,
In genius, goodness, modesty, adieu!
Adieu, Maria! till that day more blest,
When if deserving, I with thee shall rest.
Come, then, thy sire will cry, with joyful strain,
O come to my paternal arms again

Duncombe.

This is not happily translated, but it is better than Cowper's translation of the part which he has borrowed.

Lady Austen, p. 341—Hayley speaks thus of this lady, from whom he obtained much valuable information, and who died while his Life of Cowper was in the press.

"Her maiden name was Richardson; she was married very early in life to Sir Robert Austen, Baronet and resided with him in France, where he died. Her intercourse with Cowper is already related;—in a subsequent period she was married to a native of France, Mr. De Tardiff, a gentleman and a poet, who has expressed, in many elegant French verses, his just and deep sense of her accomplished, endearing character. In visiting Paris with him in the course of the summer of 1802, she sunk under the fatigue of the excursion, and died in that city on the 12th of August.

"My obligations to her kindness induce me to terminate this brief account of a person so cordially regarded by Cowper, and so instrumental to the existence of his greatest work, with an offering of respect and gratitude, in the shape of

AN EPITAPH.

HONOUR and Peace! ye guardians kindly just,
Fail not in duty to this hallowed dust!
And mortals (all, whose cultured spirits know
Joys that pure faith and heavenly verse bestow,)
Passing this tomb, its buried inmate bless,
And obligation to her powers confess
Who, when she graced this Earth, in Austen's name,
Waked in a Poet Inspiration's flame;
Removed by counsel, like the voice of spring,
Fetters of diffidence from fancy's wing;
Sent the freed eagle in the sun to bask,
And from the mind of Cowper—call'd the TASK!

"I close my work with these verses, from a persuasion, that I can pay no tribute to the memory of Cowper more truly acceptable to his tender spirit, than praise sincerely bestowed on the objects of his affection."

Mr. Raban, p. 369.—There is an account of Thomas Raban in the Evangelical Biography, (1807,) vol. iv. His grandfather was a French refugee. He was born at Turvey, in Bedfordshire, 1734, the youngest son of parents in middling circumstances, and having been made a ready accountant under the instruction of a clergyman, was apprenticed to a carpenter and builder at Olney in 1748, at which time, in the language of the professors, "the gospel began to be preached in Olney church, Mr. Moses Browne, author of Sunday Thoughts, being inducted to the living, and through an indulgent Providence it has continued there ever since." "Raban then attended the church, and became the stated hearer and affectionate friend of Moses Browne." Sometimes also he attended on Mr. Hervey's ministry. He says of Whitefield, "I once had the honour of having him hang on my arm, and to be sure I thought myself the happiest of men. Also at another time I attended him as a guide to a village, where he was going to preach, to my unspeakable gratification."

"About 1778, a new scene opened before him; through the solicitation of others, and in conjunction with an intimate friend, he began to exhort at a prayer meeting, attended by members of the establishment. They persevered in this practice some time, solely," says the memorialist, "with a view of being serviceable to their fellow-christians in that neighbourhood, though the Lord, by this step, was preparing them for spheres of usefulness in another direction, and the great Bishop of Souls soon found employment for both of them."

These meetings accorded better with Mr. Newton's views than with those of his successor in the curacy; and the annexed fragment of a letter from Cowper to the former, shows that when Raban found fault with Mr. Page's sermons, the curate retaliated upon his carpentry.

MY DEAR SIR, August 31, 1780.

THE curate and churchwarden,
And eke exciseman too,
Have treated poor Tom Raban,
As if he was a Jew.

For they have sent him packing,
No more in church to work,
Whatever may be lacking;
As if he was a Turk.

Thus carry they the farce on,
Which is great cause of grief,
Until that *Page* the parson
Turn over a *new leaf*.

Thus sings the Muse, and though her fav'rite cue
Is fiction, yet her song is sometimes true.

At least we are much misinformed if the foregoing tale be not so. Bright Andrew's son is employed as church-carpenter instead of Mr. Raban, and another man has been employed to make sixteen coffins, though if Mr. Raban had not sold him the boards, he could not have found materials to make them with. Besides all this, we have heard a rumour which at present is so confused and full of obscurity as not to be quite intelligible, that a storm is gathering from the D————h quarter, which threatens both Mr. Robinson and Mr. Raban. It is said to have been raised by Maurice Smith, whose quarrel with Mr. Raban is that Mr. Page cannot preach to please him. It is certain that the said churchwarden Smith and Tolson the exciseman did lately repair to the house of Mr. Raban, and there expostulate with him in very angry and unhandsome terms upon that subject, which, being equal in zeal and knowledge, they were well qualified to do. Mr. Sample, who happened to be there, was Mr. Raban's second, and had the courage to address himself to Mr. Smith in these terms. 'I'll tell you what, Mr. Smith, I do really think you are a very meddlesome fellow!' What further passed on the occasion 'we have not heard, nor perhaps would it be worth relating, only as it serves as a specimen of that disorder and confusion into which every thing has been thrown in this parish, by Mr. Browne's two unhappy appointments.

Without supposing that these disputes induced him to separate himself from the church, it is obvious that such meetings as Mr. Newton had encouraged were likely to become seminaries of dissent. We are told accordingly that Mr. Raban's "gifts for prayer and public exhortation" having been acknowledged to be profitable in this training school, "he received a call," in 1783, from the congregation at Yardley, which he accepted, though he continued to reside at Olney, and to follow his business. "This enabled him to serve his flock with scarcely any reward but their affections and prayers." "But his labours were not confined to one spot, for he delighted occasionally to itinerate. He maintained lectures in different places with unwearied perseverance, and it is worthy of remark, that he was the first dissenting minister who established a lecture at Woburn, where there is now a settled congregation."

Though Mr. Raban was considered to be skilful in his business, and was in good employ, he gradually withdrew from it, and applied himself to farming during the last twenty years of his life. "Success," says his biographer, "attending him, he gratefully acknowledged the hand of the Lord in providing more comfortably for him as the evening of life came on, than it might otherwise have been." That he was a resolute man appears in Cowper's letters; and he was a kind hearted one also, for though no man was more ready to bring a criminal to justice, yet when firewood had been stolen from his premises, and he believed that the thief had been induced by poverty to the deed, he observed, that if he had been there he should have turned his head another way, or have said, "Poor fellow! don't overload yourself; and the next time you want fuel, come and ask my leave."

Raban had not less than four marvellous escapes from death. He fell from an unfinished building, two stories high; at another time a large piece of timber, on which he had set his foot, heaved up and fell with him

into a sawpit, and a heavy anvil, connected with the wood, fell also, but only bruised his leg. Again, as he was assisting in raising a beam on a wall, the rope slipped, and the beam fell from the height of four stories, carrying him with it; but though much injured, he escaped with life. Lastly, when driving a team with a load of hay down a narrow lane and attempting to get to the other side of the waggon, he fell under the wheel; but had presence of mind enough to call to the horses to stop, which they did in a moment, and thus he was saved from instantaneous death. Yet after these extraordinary escapes, he died in consequence of his foot slipping over a pebble, as he was leaving a friend's house at Woburn, after preaching there. He broke his leg in the fall, and though for three weeks there was every appearance of recovery, fatal symptoms then came on. Mr. Bull preached his funeral sermon in the market place at Olney, the concourse being too great for the meeting house.

"Mr. Raban used, in reviewing the goodness of God towards him, to observe how much his case resembled that of Elijah when fed by ravens, in obtaining the most unexpected means of support. Though he felt truly thankful for every instance of kindness shown him, succour often came from a friend the Lord directed to him, and not which he himself had sought." It is added in a note upon this passage, "Mr. Raban often regretted that men of fortune, especially professors of the gospel, did not more readily come forward to assist industrious tradesmen with the loan of a few pounds without interest. A part of the character of a religious man is, 'that he putteth not out his money to usury;' and to this purpose our Lord says, 'Do good and lend, hoping for nothing again, and your reward shall be great.' Bearing these and other scriptures in mind, he contended that the opulent would be no losers, while they would materially assist a worthy part of the community, who without such assistance often fall into poverty, and struggle with difficulties all their days."

Well indeed would it be, if the money which is worse than wasted upon common vagabonds, were employed in administering efficient help where it is most needed. Dr. Franklin had a method of making his bounty circulate. Sending a bill for ten *Louis d'ors* to an unfortunate American in France, he said to him, "I do not pretend to *give* such a sum, I only *lend* it to you. When you shall return to your country with a good character, you cannot fail of getting into some business that will in time enable you to pay all your debts; in that case, when you meet with another honest man in similar distress, you must pay me by lending this sum to him, enjoining him to discharge fhe debt by a like operation when he shall be able, and shall meet with such another opportunity. I hope it may thus go through many hands before it meets with a knave that will stop its progress. This is a trick of mine for doing a deal of good with a little money. I am not rich enough to afford *much* in good works, and so am obliged to be cunning, and make the most of a *little*." I wish Franklin could have told us that this loan answered its purpose, and continued to circulate according to his intentions. Benevolence is so often not only disappointed but deceived, that it is always cheering to hear of an instance in which it has been successfully bestowed. One such has been

related to me as pertinent to this subject by an old friend who happened to be present when I was preparing these notes for the press.

Many years ago he was returning to his father's house in the neighbourhood of London, from an evening drill of the regiment of volunteer cavalry, in which he had enlisted as a private, and being dressed accordingly in a flannel jacket, with a watering cap, and a simple light dragoon's sword girded round his waist, he was accosted by a man of the working class, who was going the same way as himself. From idleness or curiosity, or perhaps flattered at being taken for a real soldier, he availed himself of the incident for his amusement at the moment, and talked with his companion in the tone and style of his assumed character; but he soon found that he had made a false estimate, and had placed himself in a state of unnecessary inferiority. He therefore raised his style and topics of conversation to a level with those of his new acquaintance, and found him a man habituated to thinking and even to talking well; and when they were about to part company, he enquired his name and calling. He was a shoemaker when good fortune allowed him to be so, but did not in ordinary call himself more than a cobbler, was married, had a family, and carried on his employment in a village, not far from the residence of my friend's father. This happened in one of the years of scarcity. Shortly after a subscription was raised in the district for assisting the poor with food, fuel, and clothing, and some of the subscribers made a point of personally attending at the distribution. On Saturday evening, a clean, respectable-looking woman presented herself at the rice-tub in the chapel, and told her name, her husband's employment, the number of their children, and the state of distress to which the pressure of the times had reduced them. These particulars revived my friend's recollection of his meeting with the cobbler,—whose wife she proved to be. He obtained a satisfactory account of his character from some of the poor who knew him, and he desired to see him. The man was not a little surprised at recognising his accidental acquaintance, and gladly accepted the little temporary employment which was given him. He said he only wanted work to regain his station among his neighbours, and that if he was once set agoing again in the world, he had no doubt he should make his way and maintain his family. Some little time after, he applied to my friend for a loan of two pounds. The request was made modestly, but in a manly way, and with a promise to return the sum by instalments of five shillings at the end of every fortnight. The money was advanced, and at the end of the fortnight the first instalment was punctually made.

A quantity of shoe leather was about this time purchased by the subscribers to the charity, with a view of giving employment as well as relief to some of the objects of it. A fair share of this was placed in this poor man's hands. And shortly after, during a morning ride, my friend saw a little party, consisting apparently of a mother and her children, under a large tree in a neighbouring park, seated round a clean table, at their frugal but cheerful holiday meal, and he was not a little gratified at finding it to be the family of his *protégé*.

The instalments were regularly paid, and with the last of them came a letter, written either by the husband or wife, and signed by both. It

would be an injustice to quote it partially and from memory, as my friend could only do when he gave me this account. The contents and style, he says, would be creditable to any writer whatsoever.

The honesty of the man, and the efficacy of the mode of relief, had now been fully proved and ascertained. But something more creditable than the composition of the letter was yet to come. The sum originally lent was now offered to him as a gift, and the reasons for taking each instalment explained to him; but he declined it, though it was pressed upon his acceptance. "No, sir," he said, "it would be abusing your kindness. The money has fully answered the purpose for which you lent it to me. I am no longer in want of it, and I should think meanly of myself if I were to take it upon any other plea. Besides, if I were to fall into misfortunes again, I could never have the courage to come to you a second time, and ask for a repetition of such a favour."

It is pleasant to add, that his name and trade, D———, Shoemaker, were long to be seen over the door of a small, neat-looking shop in the village where he resided, and that when he was last heard of, he was considered as an industrious, respectable, and prosperous man by his neighbours.

Henry and Emma, p. 394.—Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, in one of her admirable letters to the Countess of Bute, says, "I cannot forbear saying something in relation to my grand-daughters, who are very near my heart. If any of them are fond of reading, I would not advise you to hinder them (chiefly because it is impossible,) seeing poetry, plays, or romances; but accustom them to talk over what they read, and point out to them, as you are very capable of doing, the absurdity often concealed under fine expressions, where the sound is apt to engage the admiration of young people. I was so much charmed at fourteen with the dialogue of Henry and Emma, I can say it by heart to this day,—without reflecting on the monstrous folly of the story in plain prose, where a young heiress to a fond father is represented falling in love with a fellow she had only seen as a huntsmen, a falconer, and a beggar; and who confesses, without any circumstance of excuse, that he is obliged to run his country, having newly committed a murder. She ought reasonably to have supposed him at best a highwayman; yet the virtuous virgin resolves to run away with him, to live among the banditti, and wait upon his trollop, if she had no other way of enjoying his company. This senseless tale is, however, so well varnished with melody of words and pomp of sentiments, I am convinced it has hurt more girls than ever were injured by the worst poems extant."—Vol. iv. p. 269.

END OF VOL. II.

J. BILLING, PRINTER, WOKING, SURREY.